

## The Ukrainian SORT IT Course

# Why a special issue of JIDC on tuberculosis and HIV among key populations in Ukraine?

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### On behalf of the editorial board of JIDC

*“Despite current program achievements, reaching undiagnosed people who inject drugs and linking them to care for both TB and HIV remains a challenge. We are also privileged to have such a large and good quality program data, thus we should definitely make a best use of it to improve existing interventions for each and every individual.”*

Anton Basenko, Ukrainian Network of People Who Use Drugs.

The Journal of Infection in Developing Countries (JIDC) aims to support countries publish operational research and foster evidence-informed decision making to improve public health.

Operational research is a recognized tool needed for the sustainable scale up of programs related to tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS care, particularly for key and vulnerable populations. It is an important pillar of both the World Health Organization’s (WHO) End TB Strategy and the 2016-2020 tuberculosis Action Plan for the WHO European Region [1,2]. The publications in this supplement of the JIDC stems from a Structured Operational Research and Training Initiative (SORT IT) course provided to health workers working with key populations in Ukraine [3].

The International Charitable Foundation “Alliance for Public Health” (Alliance) have been a prime recipient of the Global Fund since 2004. It is currently one of the three country implementors of a Global Fund Project called “Accelerating Ukraine’s progress towards a sustainable public health response to TB and HIV”. It is also a prime recipient of a PEPFAR funded grant on HIV case-finding and linkage to care [4].

Alliance works in a close collaboration with the Center for Public Health of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine and both institutions strongly support improving data quality and data utilization [5]. The publications presented here are a first, in a series of formative research cycles that should contribute to improving programme performance.

These operational research projects were coordinated by the Alliance in Ukraine and are unique in that they focus largely on key population groups that lie outside the realms of routine public health systems. JIDC thanks all who have contributed to this issue and encourages researchers in other regions to also contribute to the journal.

### References

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