Background
In Europe, HIV/STIs are concentrated in certain vulnerable groups, above all, men who have sex with men (MSM). For this reason, targeted HIV-testing interventions are paramount. In 2002, a community-based HIV-testing service using rapid HIV-tests was established in Amsterdam and given the name "Checkpoint". Since then, the concept of community-based centres (CBCs) for HIV-testing and other sexual health services has spread throughout Europe, and many such centres have been established using the name "Checkpoint" (CP). Over the years, many centres have offered more comprehensive services regarding gay health, including testing for other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), counselling on drugs use, vaccination, and even provision of HIV treatment. The aim of this study was to map community-based (and other) sexual health centres targeting gay and other MSM in Europe.

Methods
In preparation of the second round of the European MSM Internet Survey (EMIS-2017), the EMIS-Network, consisting of more than 80 academic, governmental, and non-governmental organisations, was contacted by email (08/2015) to identify “Checkpoints” and other sexual health centres for gay men throughout Europe. 56 centres were identified and 54 responded. Representatives for the centres were asked for the exact number of sexual health centres for men who have-sex with men (MSM); count over time. https://goo.gl/OVjdnf

Results
Community-based centres (CBCs, N=44) were distinguished from traditional clinics/private practices (“clinics”, N=10), although such binary classification is not always clear-cut. The label “community-based”, in this context, involves ownership and/or decision power by a collective of gay men. The proportion of gay men among employees was 67% in CBCs and 41% in clinics. CPs in Geneva, Stockholm, Berlin, and Odense had no gay men employed, while CP Amsterdam, Aarhus, Bern, Copenhagen reported less than 50%. The majority of CBCs (68%) and clinics (80%) had gay physicians employed or closely attached.

We calculated two scores based on the 14 answers given by representatives of the centres. Figure 2 contrasts the two 7-point-scores: on the vertical axis the score for counselling and community-involvement, on the horizontal axis the score for counselling and community-involvement.

All centres offered rapid HIV-testing, most (66% of CBCs) offered syphilis-testing, some (39% of CBCs) also featured anal and pharyngeal swabbing. STI treatment was offered by 18% of CBCs, 69% had a standard referral arrangement. Vaccination against hepatitis A/B (18%), HIV-post-exposure-prophylaxis (11%), and particularly HIV-treatment (7%) were rarely offered by CBCs. As expected, clinics ranked high on the vertical axis, reaching a score of 5 or higher. Among CBCs, only the Swiss Checkpoints Geneva, Lausanne and Zurich; Checkpoint Barcelona, and GMHS-Dublin reached a high score.

Compared to the vertical score, the horizontal score for counselling and community involvement is more subject to individual interpretation, especially with respect to the availability of counselling for mental health (75% of CBCs; 80% of clinics), for trans-gender health (59%; 50%, and for drug use/addiction (57%; 60%). While in some smaller centres one counsellor covers all three areas, larger centres often employ highly specialised and qualified personnel for each area. Nearly all CBCs (95%) and half (50%) of the clinics did outreach work, while 50% and 80%, respectively, organised MSM-related research.

Applications
The list is still incomplete, especially NHS services (UK) and clinics offering gay-friendly HIV-testing are missing. However we believe we covered all comprehensive sexual health services for MSM in Europe that fall into the upper right quadrant of Figure 2. The added value of maintaining up-to-date listings of CBCs is their use in online mapping services and integration in geo-location-based dating-apps targeting MSM. Experience with the European HIV-Testing-Week has shown that reaching out to MSM through push notifications with a spectrum of HIV services and opening times of Checkpoints is both cost-effective and accepted by the community.

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