

Naz Latina : a culturally and linguistically appropriate prevention and support service for Latin American communities in London / NPL, Naz Project London.

Contributors

Naz Project (London, England)

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Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

Naz *Latina*

A culturally and linguistically appropriate prevention and support service for Latin American communities in London



NAZ PROJECT LONDON

An HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health Service for South
Asian, Middle Eastern, North African, Horn of
Africa, Latin American and Other Excluded
Communities

Naz Latina was established in September 1997 and is part of the Naz Project London.

It emerged in response to the growing need of information, care and support for those Latin Americans living in London who are infected/affected by HIV and AIDS.

There is a lack of sexual health services which are cultural and linguistically appropriate for the Latin American communities. We aim to be advocates on behalf of our communities and provide an immediate and practical service on sexual health promotion and HIV and AIDS prevention. Research carried out within the Latin American community on HIV/AIDS awareness (1995), showed how little knowledge people had about this topic. The majority wished to have more information on HIV/AIDS in Spanish and Portuguese.

It is important to challenge prejudice and discrimination suffered by people affected and/or infected with HIV and AIDS in our communities



AIMS

To improve access to HIV, AIDS and sexual health services to people from the Spanish and Portuguese speaking Latin American communities infected or affected by HIV and AIDS. To campaign to ensure that Spanish and Portuguese speaking Latin American communities are not excluded from these services.

To provide culturally and linguistically appropriate HIV and AIDS prevention, sexual health promotion and client support services to the Spanish and Portuguese speaking Latin American communities in London.

SERVICES

- Client support: advocating, interpreting, representations, and referrals;
- Workshops/Talks on sexual health and HIV/AIDS for our communities and service providers;
- Development of resources in Spanish and Portuguese on HIV/AIDS and sexual health: leaflets, posters, postcards, condom packs, glossary;
- Distribution and advertisement of developed resources in: clinics, hospitals, Latin-American organizations and events, press, bars and clubs.

We also facilitate and promote the development of support groups such as:

- Latin American Gay Group;
- Grupo de auto-ajuda "Pau-Brasil" (self help support group for HIV+ people from Brazil).

HIV AND AIDS IN LATIN AMERICA

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 1.6 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean have already been infected with HIV. The number of HIV infections and AIDS cases in South America is rising steadily. Within this specific region, Brazil accounts for most of the cases of AIDS in Latin America reported to PAHO (Pan American Health Organisation), followed by the Andean Region in countries such as Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador (15%) and the Southern Cone formed by Argentina, Chile and Uruguay (10%).

Sexual transmission of HIV accounts for 74% of all reported AIDS cases (51 % are men who have unprotected sex with men and 23% heterosexual). In Mexico studies suggest that up to 30% of men who have sex with men may be infected; among drug injectors in Argentina and Brazil the proportion may be close to half. While transmission through sex between men and women is on the rise, especially in Brazil, heterosexual HIV spread is especially prominent in the Caribbean.

Blood and vertical transmission (from mother to child) and undocumented cases represent the other 7%.

It is alarming the rise of women contracting the virus in the region of our communities, specially those coming from the poorer sectors of society. In Brazil it has become the main cause of mortality among women in reproductive age. The number of HIV positive women in Brazil is around 30,000. In Latin America, 20% of HIV positive adults, are women.

However the region not only faces difficulties in implementing appropriate and direct prevention campaigns but the lack of access to current new anti-retroviral treatments is threatening the survival of many people with AIDS. In El Salvador the triple Therapy cocktail costs about \$700 per month in a country where per capita income is still under \$300 a month.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) predicts that Latin America could be the highest risk area after Africa and Asia.

LATIN AMERICANS IN LONDON

Little is known of the situation of Latin Americans living in London. What is known, is that the number of new immigrants is constantly growing. According to the Home Office in the last year for which figures are available (1992), 87,000 Brazilians, 54,000 Argentineans, 21,000 Colombians and 14,000 Chileans came through British entry points to visit friends and relatives, as tourists, to work or study (CALA/Health First Report, 1995).

However, these figures do not reflect the reality because in the last years we have seen an increase in the number of Colombians and Ecuadorians coming to this country. Also it is important to consider that some immigrants are overstaying and not accessing mainstream health service.

The number of people contracting the HIV virus is growing in Latin America for different reasons such as lack of information, education, access to health services, poverty, religious motivations and prejudice as well as inadequate prevention policies and campaigns. In many cases, these factors do not disappear with the movement of populations from country to country, but are carried by the person who emigrates probably affecting his/her sexual health.

Latin Americans, as an ethnic group living in Great Britain, experience difficulties in terms of access to information, resources and services.

Figures for Latin Americans living with HIV or AIDS in London are not available, and ethnic monitoring data usually categorizes them as 'other'.

Our service is free and confidential.

0208-741 1879 from 10.00 to 5.00pm

Naz Project London
Palingswick House
241 King Street
London W6 9LP
Tel: 0208 741 1879 Ext. 208
Fax: 0208 741 9609

e-mail: nazlon@dircon.co.uk

For further information please fill in the box
below and send it to us.

Name:

Address:

NAZ LATINA
NAZ PROJECT LONDON

Addressing the needs of excluded communities.