

NATIONALITY AND REFERRAL SOURCES OF PEOPLE WITH HIV SEEKING FIRST CONSULTATIONS: A 13-YEAR RETROSPECTIVE COHORT STUDY AT THE HOSPITAL CLINIC OF BARCELONA

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BACKGROUND

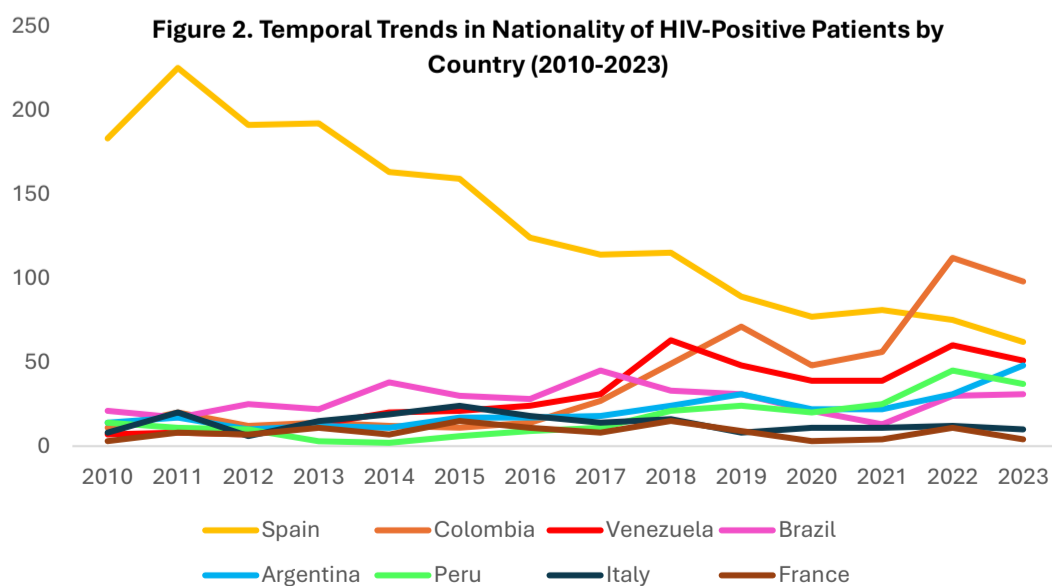
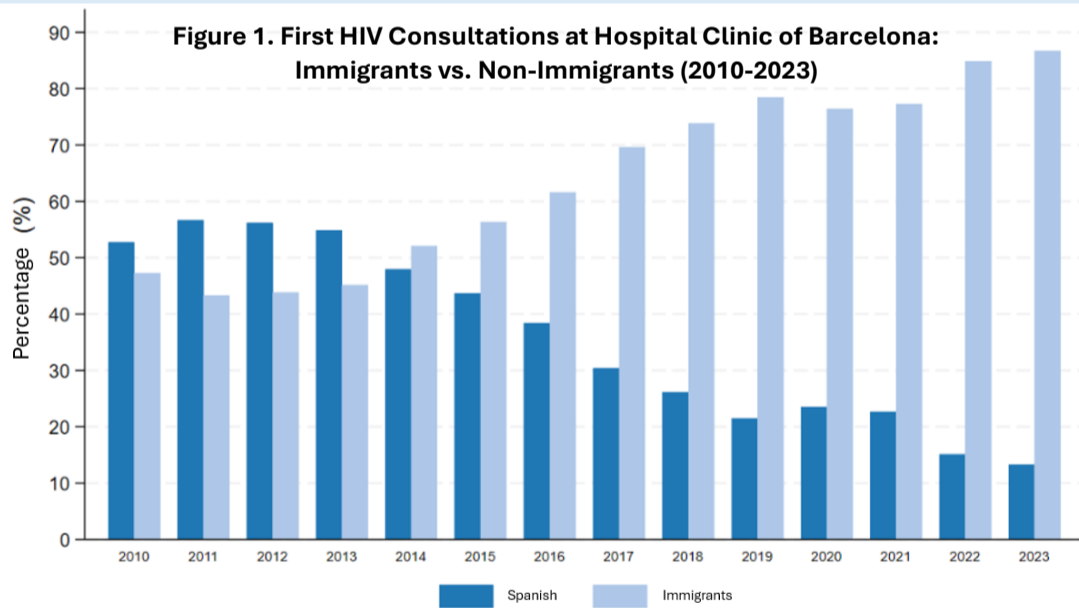
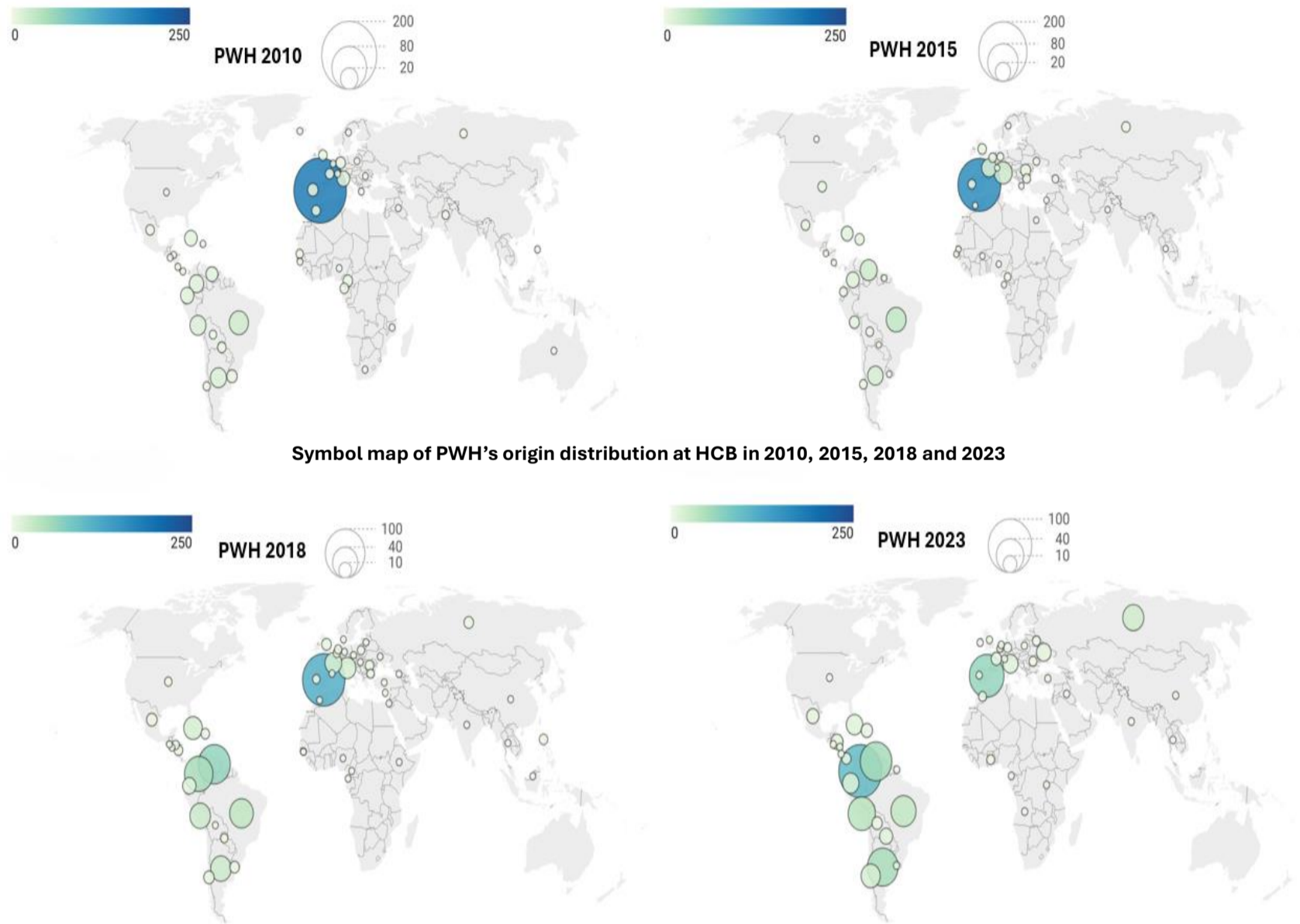
The increasing immigration in Europe has brought healthcare challenges, particularly among people with HIV (PWH). This demographic shift requires focused analysis to improve integration and care for immigrant-PWH.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A retrospective, longitudinal study was conducted at the Hospital Clínic of Barcelona (HCB). We included PWH with their first consultation between 2010 and 2023. The primary objective was to evaluate demographic changes in immigrants versus Spanish PWH.

Secondary objectives were:

- PWH demographics,
- Continental and Country-Specific shifts,
- Referral sources, and Factors influencing referral. The sources of referrals were Primary Care (PC), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Sexually Transmitted Infections Screening Programs (STISP), and hospitals.



RESULTS

The study included 5344 individuals, of which immigrant PWH represented 3494 (65%) of the first consultations. There is a rise in immigrant PWH from 47% (164/347) in 2010 to 87% (412/474) in 2023. Conversely, Spanish-PWH declined from 53% (183/347) to 13% (62/474), respectively. The proportion of first consultations from America rose from 31% (109/347) to 72% (343/474). European (excluding Spain), African, and Asian/Oceanian remained at 9-19%, 0-5%, and 3%, respectively.

From 2010 to 2015, Spain had the highest median PWH at 192 (44%-57%). Colombia followed with a median of 14 (3%-5%), then Argentina with 14 (3%-5%). Brazil had a median of 26.5 (5%-11%), Venezuela 7 (2%-6%), and Peru had 8 (1%-4%). From 2018 to 2023, Spain had a median number of 80 PWH (13%-26%), making it the highest. Colombia followed with a median of 62 (6%-24%), then Venezuela with 48 (11%-13%). Brazil, Argentina and Peru had 30 (6%-13%), 26 (6%-11%), 25 (5%-10%) PWH, respectively.

Referrals from other hospitals were the most common, with a higher percentage for non-immigrants (69%, n=474) compared to immigrants (51%, n=1442), p<0.001, NGO referrals were higher for immigrants than non-immigrants 24% (n=678) vs. 4% (n=28), p=0.001. PC referrals were 15% in both groups. HCB diagnoses accounted for 8% (n=53) for non-immigrants vs. 7% (n=190) for immigrants.

CONCLUSIONS

The study shows an increase in first consultations for immigrant PWH and a decline for Spanish PWH, with rising cases from the Americas. Referral sources, including hospitals and NGOs, display distinct patterns between immigrant and non-immigrant populations.