



# IAS 2019



**10TH IAS CONFERENCE ON HIV SCIENCE**

Mexico City, Mexico  21-24 July 2019



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## Acceptability of HIV and syphilis domiciliary testing among transgender women in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Virginia Zalazar, C. Frola, A. Gun, N. Cardozo, M. Duarte, S. Fabian, P. Radusky, I. Aristegui, P. Cahn, O. Sued.

 @FundHuesped

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- No conflict of interest
- Acknowledgements



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# Transgender women in Argentina

## MOST AFFECTED KEY POPULATION

- Extremely low life expectancy (estimated 35 years)
- Discrimination, isolation and lack of support
- High prevalence of infectious diseases

- **HIV prevalence: 34%**
- **Syphilis: 50.4%**
- **HPV: 97%**
- **HCV: 4.5%**



Carobene M, Bolcic F, Farías MSDR, et al. HIV, HBV, and HCV molecular epidemiology among trans (transvestites, transsexuals, and transgender) sex workers in Argentina. *J Med Virol.* 2014;86:64–70.



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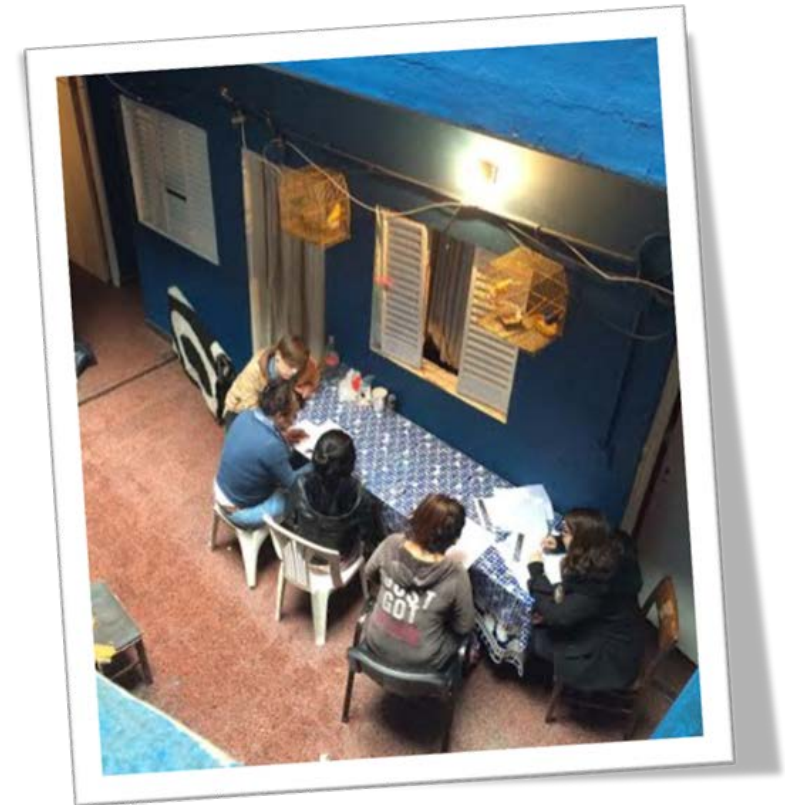
# National survey

498 respondents (452 TGW & 46 TGM)

41% of TGW avoided seeking healthcare

Factors associated were:

- **Discrimination by healthcare workers (aOR = 3.36)**
- Discrimination by other patients (aOR = 2.57)
- Currently living in Buenos Aires metropolitan area (aOR = 2.32)
- Been exposed to police violence (aOR = 2.20)
- Internalized stigma (aOR = 1.60)



Socias et al. *International Journal for Equity in Health* 2014, **13**:81  
<http://www.equityhealthj.com/content/13/1/81>



## Factors associated with healthcare avoidance among transgender women in Argentina

María Eugenia Socias<sup>1\*</sup>, Brandon DL Marshall<sup>2</sup>, Inés Arístegui<sup>1,3</sup>, Marcela Romero<sup>4</sup>, Pedro Cahn<sup>1</sup>, Thomas Kerr<sup>5,6</sup> and Omar Sued<sup>1</sup>

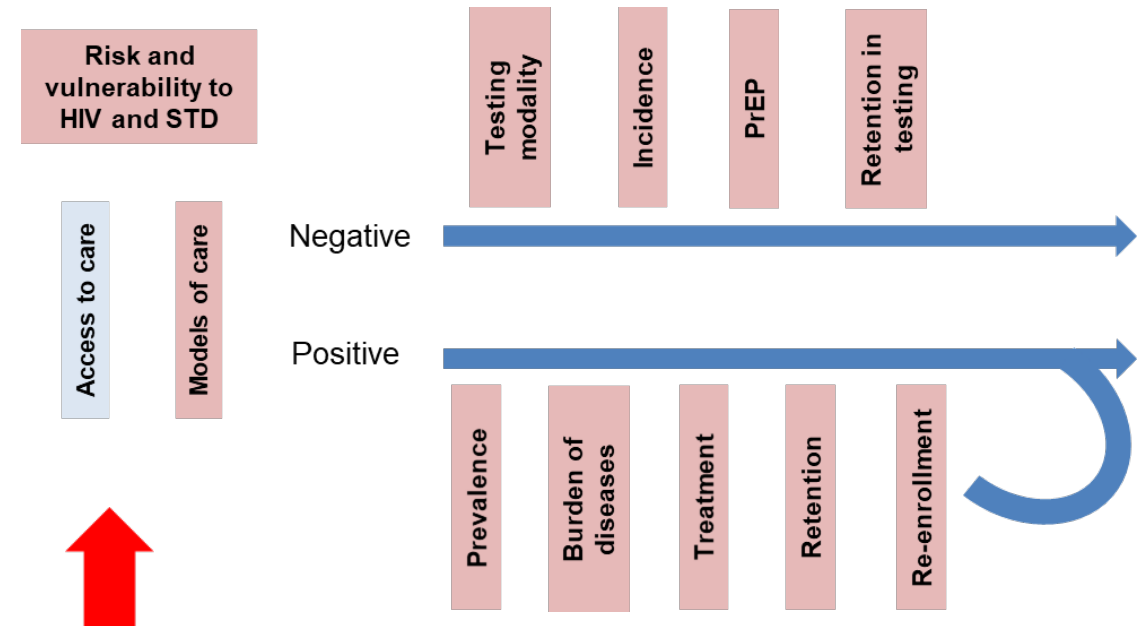


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# TransHoteles: preferred models of healthcare services

Qualitative study to evaluate potential interventions to improve HIV outcomes among TGW

- Need to provide trans-sensitive care
- **Domiciliary prevention and testing**
- Multidisciplinary team
- Facilitated appointments.
- **Peer navigators on HIV services**



INVESTIGACIÓN

Factores contextuales, sociales e individuales como barreras y facilitadores para el acceso a la salud de mujeres trans: desde la perspectiva de la comunidad

Fecha Recibido: 22/06/2018 Fecha Aceptado: 19/11/2018

Virginia Zalazar, Inés Arístegui, Nadir Cardozo, Omar Sued, Allan E. Rodríguez, Claudia Frola y Héctor Pérez



# Domiciliary provider-initiated testing strategy



Argentine organization with regional scope with focus HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health.



Argentina's Association for Travesti, Transsexual, and Transgender rights and Regional Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Transgender Network.



Organization of transgender women that self-manage a squat, a crucial refuge for transgender women in Buenos Aires.



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# TransTesting: HIV diagnosis

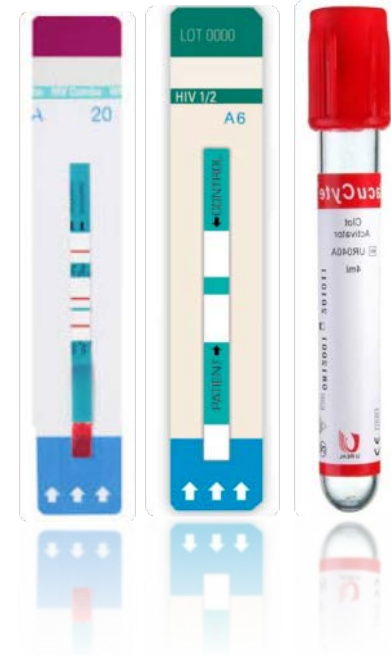
From November 2015 to August 2017, 260 TGW were tested for HIV in 4 cities of Argentina.

Two rapid tests were compared (HIV-1/2 antibodies vs. HIV-1/2 antibodies and HIV-1 p24 antigen)

51 TGW were HIV positive by RT and ELISA (19.6%), 2 additional women identified through NAT (Viral Load Pool)

## HIV + Associated factors

- Previous STIs (aOR= 3.29, 95% CI 1.48-7.32)
- Not having been tested before (aOR= 4.20, 95% CI 1.76-10.01)



## Home-based HIV testing: using different strategies among transgender women in Argentina

Claudia Frola<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Virginia Zalazar<sup>2</sup>, Nadir Cardozo<sup>2,4</sup>, María L. Vázquez<sup>2</sup>, Inés Aristegui<sup>2,4</sup>, Mar Lucas<sup>2</sup>, Ana Gun<sup>2</sup>, Pedro Cahn<sup>2</sup>, Omar Sued<sup>2</sup>.

(Submitted to JIAS)

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# Trans-ITS: HIV and syphilis rapid test

**Inclusion criteria** self-identified as TGW;  $\geq 14$  years old; previous HIV-negative >3 months or unknown status; non-history of syphilis or previous episode with >6 months after treatment.

**Acceptability survey** included 5 items with a 5 point-Likert scale, a satisfaction question, and comments.

**SD BIOLINE HIV/Syphilis Duo rapid tests** was used (detects antibodies to HIV-1 including subtype-0, HIV-2 and *Treponema pallidum*).

HIV infection was confirmed by VL. Positive treponemal tests were complemented with quantitative RPR to identify active syphilis or past infection. **All confirmed cases were referred for treatment initiation and follow-up.**



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# Results

From May 2018 to December 2018, 68 TGW were tested in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires

Median age: 26 (IQR: 25.7–29.8)

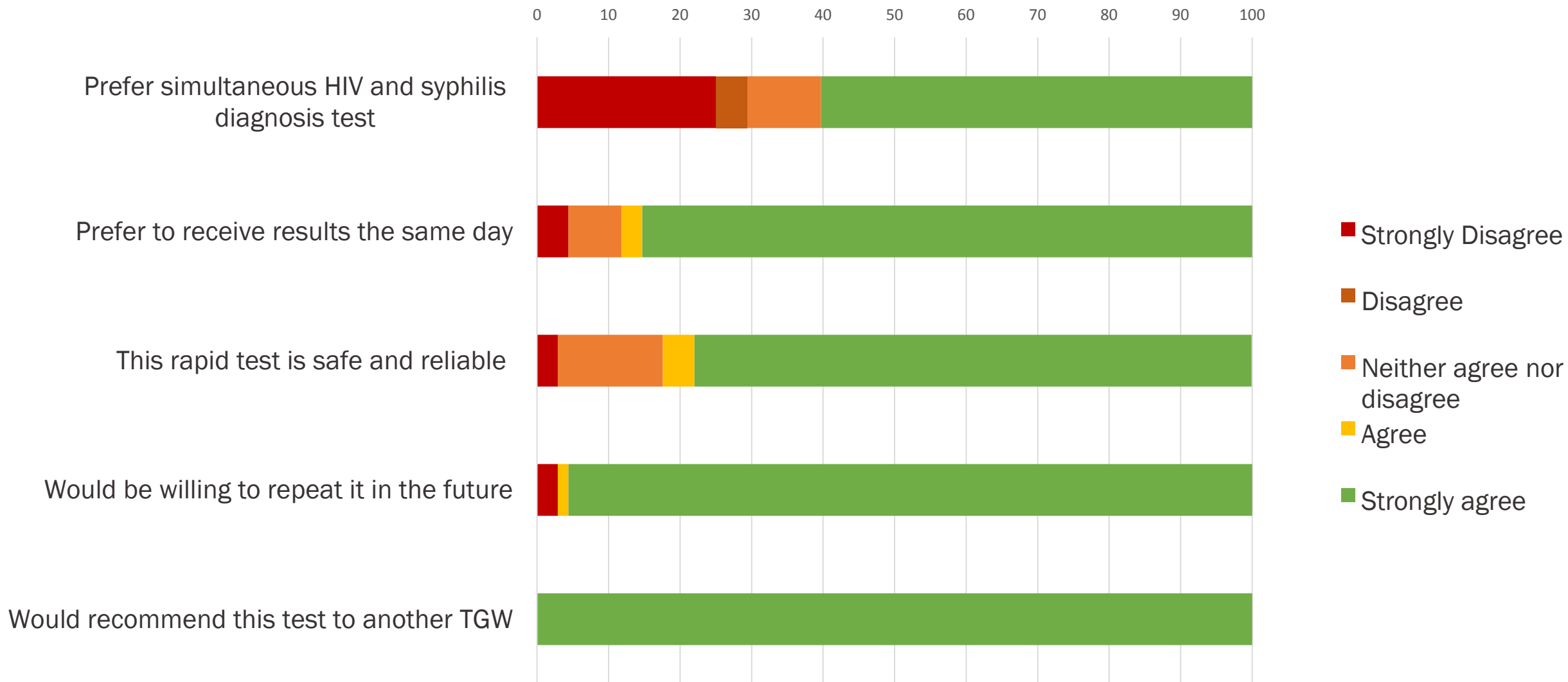
Most of them were sex workers (77.9%)

- HIV prevalence was 4.4%
- 50% had syphilis antibodies (26.5% indicating incident syphilis and 23.5% showing adequate response to previous treatment)



# Acceptability survey

98.5% considered the domiciliary rapid test as a very good/good strategy.



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# Conclusions

- TGW have a high prevalence of syphilis and HIV.
- Research activities constitute a fundamental input to inform evidence-based policies on the feasibility and acceptability of new strategies for the diagnosis of STIs that contributes to the development of appropriate and effective interventions to promote access to health services

**Domiciliary provider-initiated rapid testing of STIs is a feasible, acceptable and a successful approach for this hard-to reach population.**



## Acknowledgments

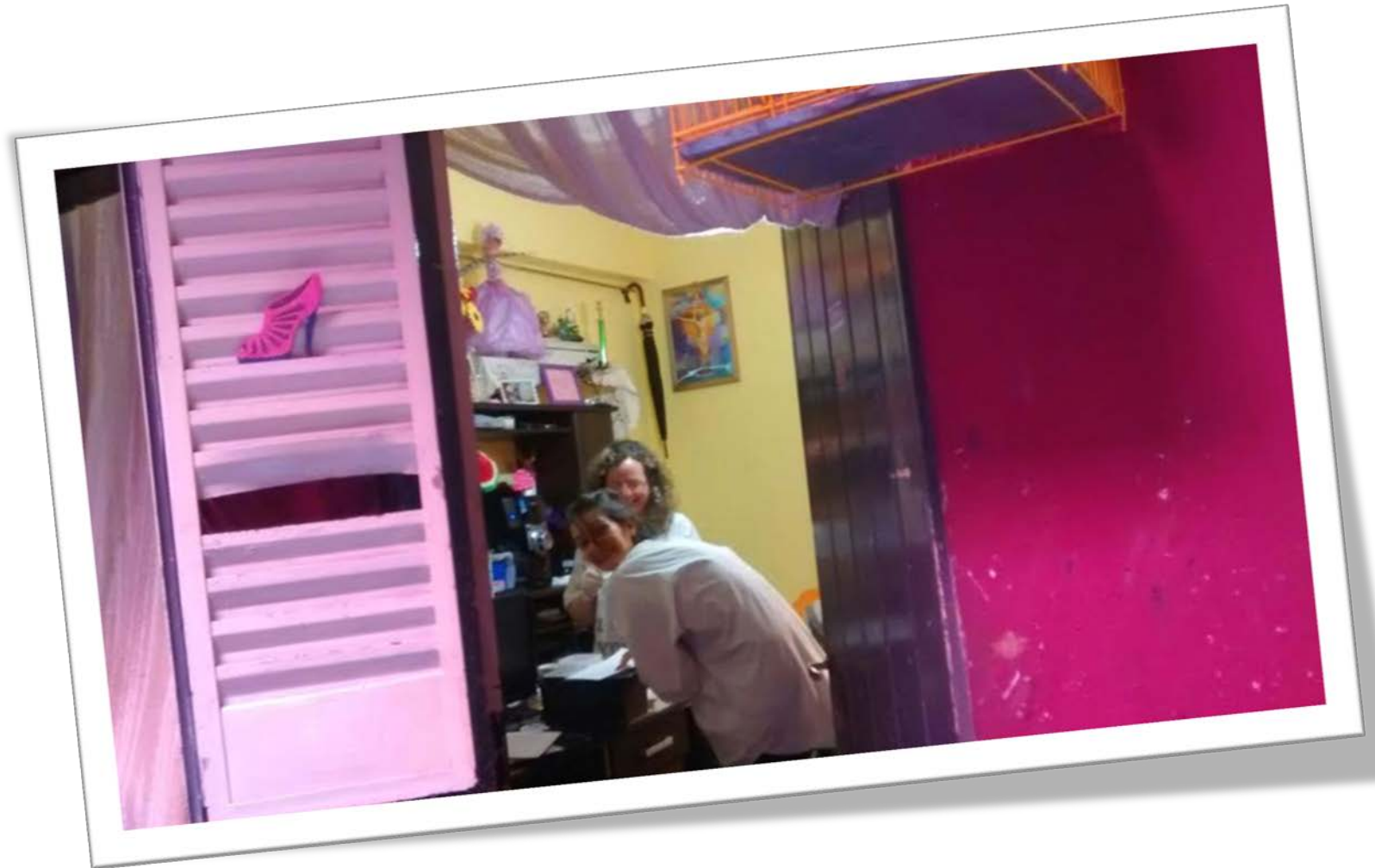
to the TGW representatives of the venues where the tests were performed and to all the participants of this study.

Abbot provided SD BIOLINE HIV/Syphilis Duo rapid test



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**¡Gracias!**



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