

Poland's first HIV dedicated web site opens

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Poland's first internet web site especially for HIV carriers and AIDS sufferers has been launched.

Pozytywni.net (or positive testing) is modelled on other social utilities that connect people. It is free and anyone can join it to write mails, discuss, exchange photos and movies, search for friends.

Most of its several dozen users, signed up so far, use nicknames though some have revealed their identity and placed their photos on the web. As one of the users who prefers to remain anonymous explains, the reason is obvious – ignorance and intolerance which are widespread in Poland.

That's why experts say the portal will help especially people who have only just learned about their infection and are at a loss, not knowing who to talk to about their problem.

"HIV carriers haven't got their own place on the internet. There are discussion sites but in Poland they are active on free servers and therefore are full of ads and do not live long, some disappear overnight. Foreign services are paid and focus on dating, leaving out such relations as support or education," one of the portal's founders Marcin Burda told *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

Pozytywni.net is also open to healthy people. It is not meant to create a "ghetto for carriers", Burda explains. **(kk)**

