

# HCV LAB MAPPING: A COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCE TO IMPROVE CURRENT TESTING LANDSCAPE

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## Introduction

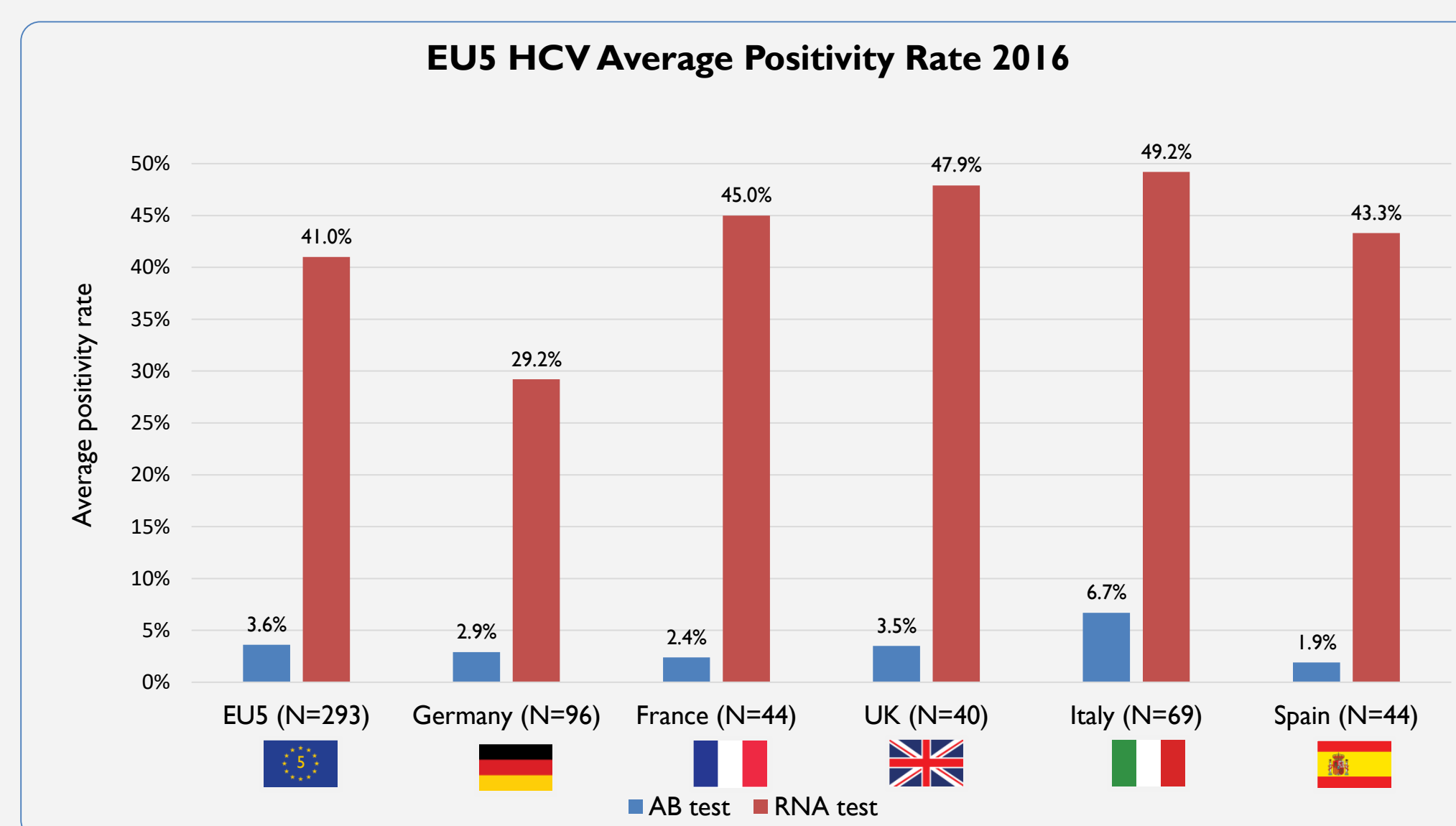
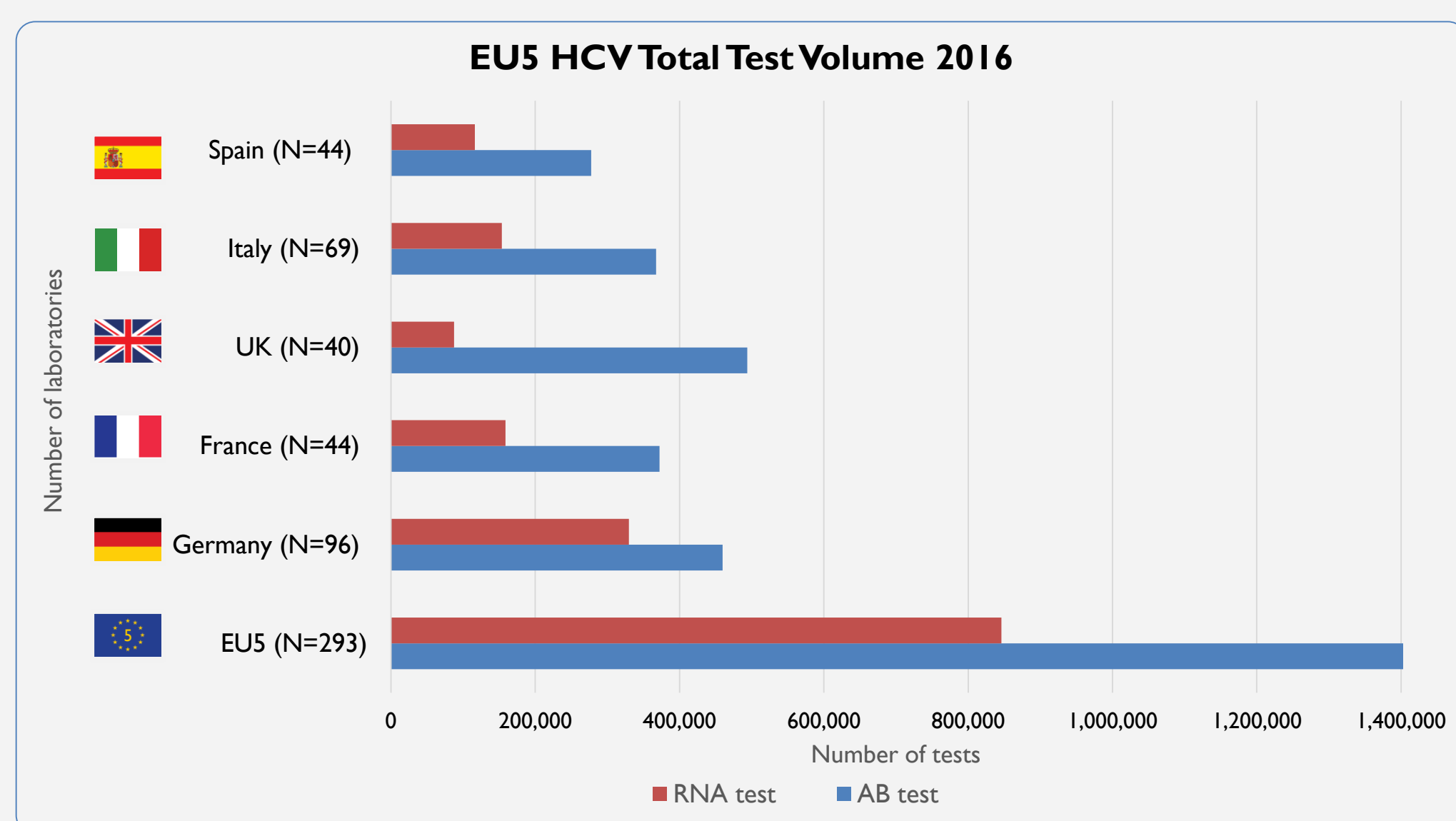
Hepatitis C is a major cause of chronic liver disease. In 2015 an estimated 71 million people had the chronic Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection which is usually asymptomatic or accompanied by non-specific symptoms. The therapy for HCV infection has greatly improved over recent years, especially with the introduction of direct acting antivirals (DAAs) that are able to achieve high cure rates, although the cost of treatment still remains a barrier in many countries. Importantly, a rapid, efficient and affordable diagnosis is fundamental to allow treatment access in order to contain HCV infection spread that is still high in Europe.

## Method

Data from the Diaceutics database, which contains testing information from a range of international laboratories, was used to understand the current HCV testing landscape in Italy. This study was part of a more extended European analysis, with a particular focus on the EU5 countries.

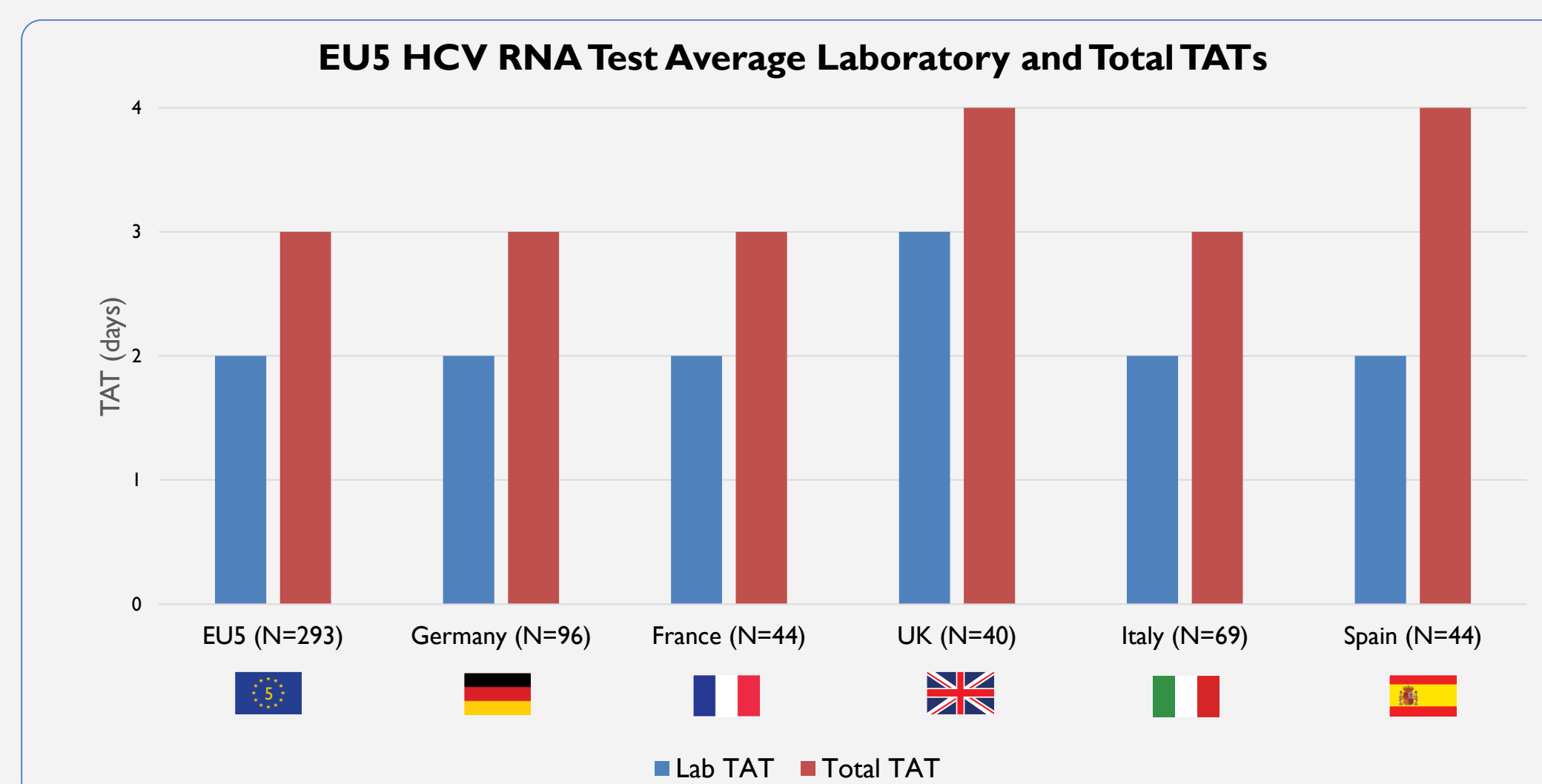
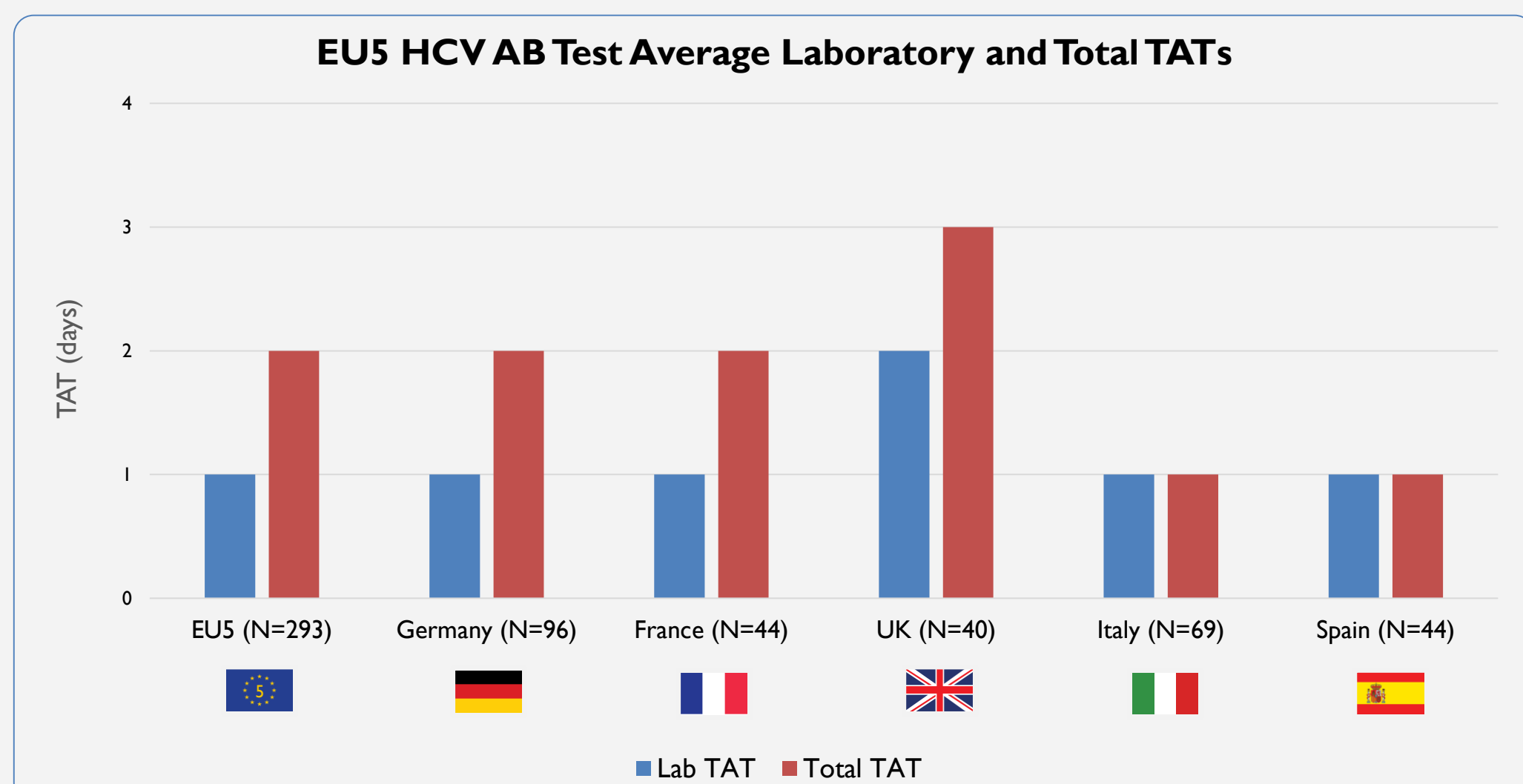
## Results

### HCV TEST VOLUME AND POSITIVITY RATES IN 2016



Data within this report, for the period of 2016, provides insights into HCV in Europe (EU), including Italy. The **Italian diagnostic landscape** is characterized by a large number of **regional testing centers**. Nevertheless, there is an increasing tendency to centralize testing, observed notably in the north. Antibody (AB) and RNA testing **positivity rates increased in 2016** from the north to the south of Italy, an area recognized as hyperendemic because of the proximity with North African countries. In all EU5 countries there is a higher growth in RNA testing when compared to AB testing, possibly correlating with larger follow-up testing for infection activity and treatment monitoring. The turnaround time (TAT) required to perform and report an HCV AB test in Italy is one of the lowest among the EU5 countries.

### HCV AB AND RNA TEST AVERAGE TAT



## Conclusions

A better understanding of the testing landscape is beneficial in a number of ways, such as epidemiology studies, monitoring the annual laboratory testing activity and budget, and developing specific campaigns to improve the number of patients tested, as recommended by WHO global HCV guidelines. Moreover, testing quality assessment programs, as well as pharma initiatives, can also be developed to support laboratory testing.