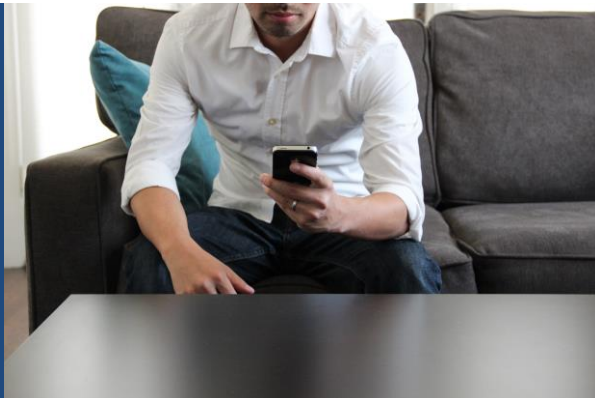# Breaking Tradition: Using the Internet to Enhance HIV Partner Notification for People who are Difficult to Reach

Lisa McCann[1], Margy Ewing[1], Samantha Blake[1], Anna McNulty[2]
[1]NSW Sexual Health Info Link
[2]Sydney Sexual Health Centre

- Remote Australia
- Fly in and fly out job
- Has sex with both men and women
- Connects with partners through social media.

Jamie

Sexual Health Infolink (SHIL) established an enhanced 'search and notify' method of Partner Notification using internet based systems.

- Contactable <u>only</u> via the internet, social media or online sexual networks
- People living in marginalised or geographically remote communities

Challenges

Communicating through the internet while maintaining professional codes of conduct

- Social context
- Ethical practice
- Social media & privacy
- Governance
- Solutions

Partner Notification Network

- To provide expert medical, psychosocial, legal or ethical guidance

- To provide peer (lived experience) and specialist advice on social mores and cultural values of priority populations

- To protect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
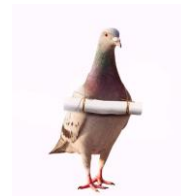
Methods

- A retrospective review from January 2015 to September 2018

- HIV Partner Notification referrals
  - Demographics
  - Number notified
  - Number tested
  - Outcome
  - Internet based and traditional systems
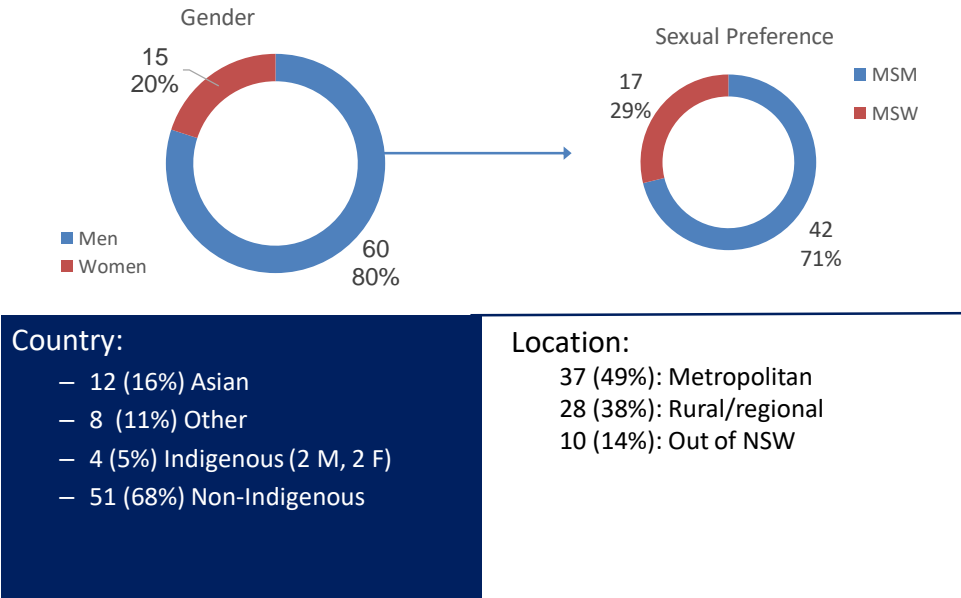
- PNN service collaborations

Internet:
- Social Media
- Geo Social Networks
- Search engines
- Healthcare databases

Traditional:
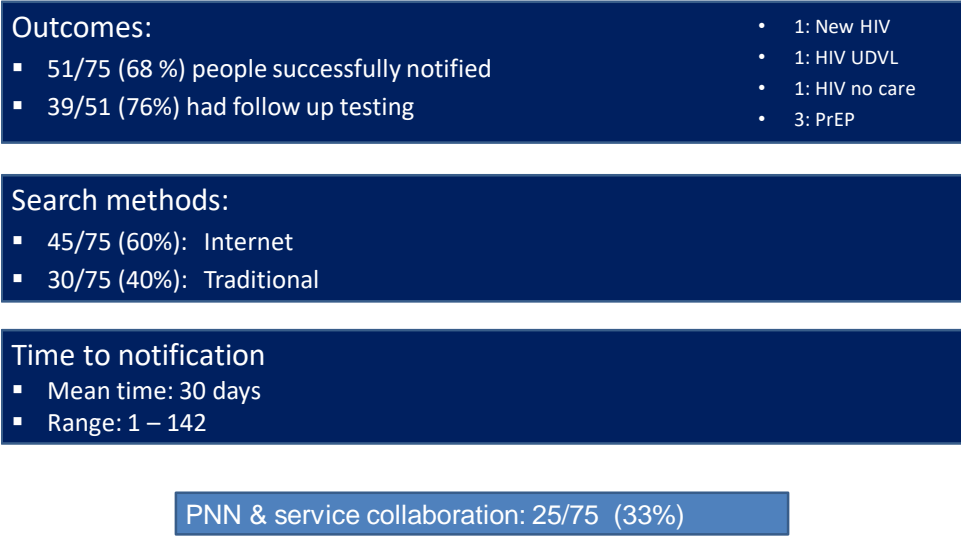- Phone/SMS
- Email
- Letter
- Home visit

Results: Demographics N=75

Gender

15
20%

60
80%

■ Men
■ Women

Sexual Preference

■ MSM
■ MSW

17
29%

42
71%

Country:
- 12 (16%) Asian
- 8 (11%) Other
- 4 (5%) Indigenous (2 M, 2 F)
- 51 (68%) Non-Indigenous

Location:
37 (49%): Metropolitan
28 (38%): Rural/regional
10 (14%): Out of NSW

Results: 'Search and Notify'

Outcomes:
- 51/75 (68 %) people successfully notified
- 39/51 (76%) had follow up testing

- 1: New HIV
- 1: HIV UDVL
- 1: HIV no care
- 3: PrEP

Search methods:
- 45/75 (60%): Internet
- 30/75 (40%): Traditional

Time to notification
- Mean time: 30 days
- Range: 1 – 142

PNN & service collaboration: 25/75 (33%)

Results: Internet Methods

Internet based methods were used to <u>search</u> for 60% (45/75) of referrals
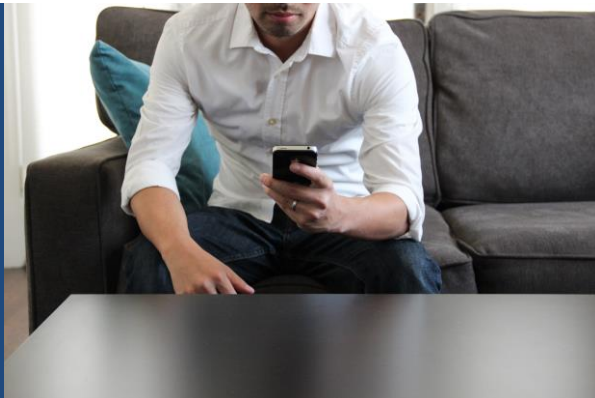- Over half were <u>notified</u> (26/45,58%)

The internet was required more often to reach:
- Heterosexually active people compared to homosexually active men
- People born outside Australia

Enhanced methods are important in reaching HIV peripheral risk groups

- Found and notified via social media
- Linked to testing
- HIV negative
- Knowledge of safer sex practices
- Confident talking to partners

Jamie

Many Strands Make One Rope

In conclusion, we found that:
- utilising a combination of traditional and internet based systems, and
- working collaboratively across the sector

…enhanced our ability to reach people who would not have been notified otherwise.

Acknowledgements

The Sydney Sexual Health Centre Team
- Brendan Crozier, Dr Rick Varma

Kirby Institute
- Dr Tobias Vickers

Results: Internet methods

Searched by internet: gender

	N = 45	%	By gender	
Male	35	78	35/60	58%
Female	9	20	9/13	70%
Transwoman	1	2	1/2	50%

Searched by internet: sexual practice (male)

	N=75	%	By sexual practice	
MSM	42	56	21/42	50%
MSW	17	23	12/17	70%

Searched by internet: Country

	N=75	%	By country	
Asian	12	16	10/12	83%
CALD	8	11	7/8	88%
Aboriginal	4	5	2/4	50%
Non-Indigenous Australian	51	68	26/51	50%

Notification by internet: location was not an influence in enhanced methods of PN