

WHAT AUSTRALIAN GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN WANT FROM HIV SELF-TEST KITS: A DISCRETE CHOICE EXPERIMENT (DCE)

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Background: Little is known about how HIV self-testing (HIVST) should be implemented in Australia. We assessed gay and bisexual men (GBM)'s preferences for HIVST.

Methods: We used a DCE to survey HIV-negative GBM age ≥ 18 years. Men were recruited in January 2018 through Grindr, and randomized (8:3) to one of two DCEs. DCE1 evaluated preferences for HIVST relative to other testing methods according to price, test accuracy, test type, collection method and who collects the specimen. DCE2 evaluated preferences for HIVST according to price, access location, packaging characteristics and usage instructions. Data were analyzed using multinomial logit.

Results: DCE1 (n=727): Price and test accuracy had the largest impact on test choice. All other things being equal, 44% of choices were for free testing, 25% for paying \$20, 18% for \$40 and 13% for \$60. Regarding accuracy, 43% of choices were for a test with 99.9% accuracy, 30% for 99.0%, 17% for 95.0% and 11% for 92.0%. Preference for self-collection over third party collection, and oral/blood-based HIVST over venipuncture was more pronounced when the influence of infrequent testing (22% of men) was considered. DCE 2 (n=275): Price and access location had the largest impact on choice. Regarding access location, 25% of choices were for online ordering, 24% for pharmacy shelf, 14% for pharmacy staff, 14% for vending machine, 14% for medical staff, 7% for sex-on-premises venue and 5% for community-based organization staff. Infrequent testers had greater preferences for a free kit, ordering kits online, and small-sized (i.e. equivalent to 2-egg-carton) plainly packaged kits. Infrequent testers (23% of men) would use HIVST in 90% of scenarios described, compared to 74% for frequent testers (p<0.001).

Conclusion: GBM prefer HIVST, but price and accuracy are key considerations. Infrequent testers are likely to self-test, particularly if available for free and accessed discretely.

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