

RESEARCH BASED TEMPLATE

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Topic 4 – Reimagining our sexual and reproductive health systems, services and care

Area: SRH and technology

Title: Evaluation of the Western Australian Syphilis Point-of-Care testing program

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Background:

The WA-Health funded Syphilis Point-of-Care Testing (PoCT) program was established in July 2020, allowing syphilis PoCT to be available in up to 24 health services. The program comprises a quality framework, provision of training and PoCT materials, all of which are funded by WA Health's Communicable Disease Control Directorate (CDCD). CDCD conducted a mixed methods process and impact evaluation of the WA Syphilis PoCT program.

Methods:

Data analysed included data routinely reported by participating service as part of enrolment conditions (service enrolment to September 2022), and those collected from a survey distributed to all 21 participating services in November 2023. The survey included questions about PoCT usage, benefits, barriers and enablers; responses were analysed using thematic analysis. Use of PoCT was examined across the 31 services that had ever participated.

Results:

During the evaluation period, 2122 syphilis PoCTs for patient testing were used, 112 were reactive. Eleven (52%) services responded to the survey. Thematic analysis identified seven themes: testing at-risk populations; immediate results and treatment; extra work; training; embedding syphilis PoCT in routine work; staff champions; and opportunistic testing. Cost per test was lower in services where staff champions motivated colleagues, PoCT was activated promptly following registration and staff burden was reduced by embedding PoCT into clinic processes.

Conclusion:

There was wide variation between services in uptake of PoCT and cost per test/reactive test. Sustainable use of PoCT was observed in services that had a PoCT staff champion and had embedded PoCT into their clinic processes.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

No disclosure of interests

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