

STI/HIV testing and diagnosis among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal adolescents in contact with the Australian justice system: a cross-sectional study

Authors:

Taflan P¹, Simpson PL¹, Wilson M², Jones J², Donovan B³, Amin J⁴, Nathan S¹, Butler T¹

¹ School of Population Health, UNSW Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia, ² National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University, Perth, WA, Australia, ³ The Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia, ⁴ Department of Health Sciences, Macquarie University, Sydney, NSW, Australia

Background:

Young people, those in custodial settings, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are priority populations in Australian national STI and HIV strategies. These often-intersecting populations are usually excluded from community health surveys, so it is unclear what factors are associated with STI/HIV testing and diagnosis among justice-involved adolescents, and if these differ based on Aboriginal status.

Methods:

A cross-sectional survey of 465 justice-involved adolescents, 14 to 17 years old, from Queensland and Western Australia, was conducted between June 2016 and August 2018. Participants were asked about sexual behaviours, STI/HIV knowledge, and prior STI diagnoses and testing, among other topics.

Results:

Approximately 38% (n=130) of those sexually active indicated they had ever been screened for STI/HIV and 17.8% (n=23) had been diagnosed with an STI. No participant reported living with HIV. For Aboriginal participants, being male (aOR 3.6, 95% CI 1.3-10.1) and having had less than three sexual partners in the last 12 months (aOR 3.1, 95% CI 1.2-8.0) was associated with never having had an STI/HIV test. For non-Aboriginal participants, being male (aOR 2.7, 95% CI 1.2-5.7), single (aOR 2.4, 95% CI 1.2-4.9), attending school (aOR 2.4 95% CI 1.1-5.1), not having sought sexual health information (aOR 2.8, 95% CI 1.4-5.8), and having a lower STI/HIV knowledge score (aOR 2.3, 95% CI 1.1-5.0) were associated with never having had an STI/HIV test. Factors associated with an STI diagnosis were non-heterosexual sexual orientation (aOR 5.6, 95% CI 1.1-28.2), transactional sex for drugs or money (aOR 11.2, 95% CI 3.0-41.3), and having sought sexual health information online (aOR 3.5, 95% CI 1.0-12.5).

Conclusion:

Different factors are associated with STI/HIV testing for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal justice-involved adolescents. These populations should be engaged with sexual health promotion and testing services at first contact with the justice system. Approaches should consider sexual orientation, gender and cultural factors.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

The Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis & Sexual Health Medicine recognises the considerable contribution that industry partners make to professional

and research activities. We also recognise the need for transparency of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by acknowledging these relationships in publications and presentations.

For an example of a disclosure of interest statement please see below

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