

MyTest: Connecting never-testers to HIV self-testing and care in NSW

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Background/Purpose

NSW HIV Strategy aims to eliminate HIV transmission, ensure 95% of people with HIV are diagnosed, and increase earlier testing among overseas-born populations. From 2013–2023, HIV notifications declined by 35%, mainly among Australian-born MSM in Inner Sydney. However, diagnoses—especially late diagnoses—increased among overseas-born MSM and those in Greater Western Sydney (GWS). In response, NSW Health launched MyTest, which provides up to four free HIV self-test kits (HIVST) monthly to people aged 16+, targeting untested or infrequently tested individuals. Kits are accessed via vending machines (VMs) in GWS and other priority areas.

Approach:

From May to December 2024, 10 VMs were installed in sex-on-premises venues (SOPVs), tertiary education sites, community services, and health facilities. Kits are discreetly packaged with condoms, lubricant, and PrEP information. The MyTest website provides test instructions, prevention content, and support service links. Promotion uses Grindr ads and community networks. Registration and dispensing data were analysed to examine testing history, country of birth, and VM location. A survey assessed acceptability and future preferences.

Outcomes/Impact:

Between March 2024 and March 2025, 1,973 people registered; 916 (46.4%) collected at least one HIVST. Of 898 with testing history, 39.6% had never tested, and 63.7% were overseas-born. Among SOPV users, 30.5% had never tested; at other venues, 49.2% were untested. Of 68 survey respondents, 20.6% used PrEP, 89.7% found registration easy, 76.1% preferred VMs for future testing, and 100% felt encouraged to test more often and recommend MyTest.

Innovation/Significance:

MyTest provides a discreet, accessible model for reaching high-risk, untested groups. Strong uptake among overseas-born and untested individuals—especially at SOPVs—shows potential to reduce barriers and support earlier, more frequent testing, advancing NSW HIV Strategy goals. The NSW HIV Strategy aims to eliminate HIV transmission, ensure 95% of people with HIV are diagnosed, and increase earlier testing among overseas-born populations.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

Nil discloser from STI Programs Unit.

The NSW HIV Prevention Research Implementation Science Monitoring (PRISM) Partnership is supported by funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council (GNT2006448) and the NSW Ministry of Health. The Kirby Institute is supported by the Australian Government Department of Health. No pharmaceutical grants were received for this study.