

# TRENDS IN HIV TESTING AMONG GAY, BISEXUAL AND OTHER MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND 2002-2022

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## Background:

The centrality of HIV testing has accelerated in the biomedical era, being a pathway into HIV treatment or pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). Innovations in HIV testing options, such as rapid and home-testing, have also been introduced earlier in Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ) than other countries. We report 20 years of NZ behavioural surveillance data among gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBM) to understand coverage and inequities.

## Methods:

Data from repeat cross-sectional HIV behavioural surveillance 2002-2022 were examined (n=18,679). Surveys were voluntary, anonymous and self-completed online or in-person. We examined trends in lifetime and recent (<12 months) testing, overall and disaggregated by age, ethnicity, region, number of sexual partners, sexual identity and condom use with casual partners. Among recent testers, we examined place last tested 2008-2022. Trends were identified using Cochrane-Armitage tests in Stata 18.

## Results:

Lifetime testing prevalence increased from 74.9% to 86.9% 2002-2022 ( $p<0.001$ ); consistently ~4% of participants had diagnosed HIV. Recent testing increased from 38.2% in 2002 to 44.1% in 2014, then 59.6% in 2022 ( $p<0.001$ ). In disaggregated analyses, recent testing prevalence increased for all participant subgroups (all  $p<0.05$ ). Between 2014 and 2022, these increased the most among participants reporting >10 male partners, and those reporting anal intercourse with casual partners. Among recent testers, the proportion testing at a general practice or sexual health clinic declined over time, and “other” sites (including rapid and home-testing) increased, rising from 3.6% to 23.4% of sites 2008-2022 ( $p<0.001$ ).

## Conclusion:

2022 saw the highest lifetime and recent testing prevalence ever recorded in NZ. The substantial increase in recent HIV testing post-2014 (the biomedical era) was seen among all participants, but especially those with higher potential exposure risks. Sites of HIV testing are diversifying, reflecting investment in innovative options, and testing access remained high even during COVID-19.

## Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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