

PREFERENCES OF MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN TOWARDS THE DISTRIBUTION OF HIV SELF-TEST KITS THROUGH SOCIAL NETWORKS: A DISCRETE CHOICE EXPERIMENT

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Background:

Social network distribution of HIV self-test (HIVST) kits utilises personal connections within social networks to increase HIV testing among marginalised populations, such as men who have sex with men (MSM). Using a discrete choice experiment (DCE), we identified factors influencing influence MSM's willingness and decision-making in HIVST kit distribution.

Methods:

An online DCE survey was conducted among MSM in Australia (December 2023–May 2024), recruited via online/offline advertisements. Participants completed seven choice sets, each containing two hypothetical scenarios for HIVST kits distribution described by attributes such as cost, location, training, support system, and self-reporting methods. Mixed logit models and latent class analysis explore preference heterogeneity across language (English vs. non-English first language) and nativity (Australian-born vs. overseas-born) groups.

Results:

There were 251 participants, including 140 overseas-born MSM, with a mean age of 36.5 (SD= 11.9). Participants who did not speak English as their first language (29/251, 12%) showed a lower preference for paid HIVST kits (\$30 or \$60 out-of-pocket cost for three kits) and online video chats with sexual health professionals as pre-test support. Overseas-born participants also preferred not to attend 30-minute or one-hour training sessions on distributing HIVST kits to social contacts. They also did not like accessing HIVST kits from hospitals. Class 1 participants ('Cost-conscious and minimal support seekers'; 61.7%) were willing to pay up to AUD 30 for three kits, while Class 2 ('Subsidy-dependent and structured support seekers'; 38.3%) strongly resisted costs and self-reporting results by phone.

Conclusion:

To increase participation in social network HIVST kit distribution, kits should be free or subsidised. Tailored support systems should prioritise overseas-born MSM with limited English proficiency.

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