

HIV TESTING AMONG ELIGIBLE AUSTRALIANS: FINDINGS FROM THE THIRD AUSTRALIAN STUDY OF HEALTH AND RELATIONSHIPS

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Background:

Regular HIV testing is a key strategy to achieve HIV elimination, as it is the gateway to timely HIV treatment, and HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis. Yet, the uptake of HIV testing among all priority populations in Australia remains unknown.

Methods:

We analysed data from the Australian Study of Health and Relationships (ASHR3), a nationally representative survey conducted every 10 years which provides data on the sexual health of Australians aged 16-69 years. In 2023-2024, computer-assisted telephone interviews were conducted, combined with an online probability and non-probability panel. We defined participants as eligible for HIV testing if they met the criteria in the National HIV Testing Policy, and we calculated the proportion who reported a HIV test in the past year.

Results:

Overall, 14,489 Australians aged 16-69 years participated (7477 women; 6861 men; 139 non-binary people). Of these, 27.9% (95%CI: 27-28.8) were eligible for a HIV test, and 21.3% (95%CI: 19.9-22.8) reported a HIV test in the past year. The proportion who had a HIV test in past year was highest among those reporting a STI test in the past year (46%; 95%CI: 42.9-49.1), and gay men (42%; 95%CI: 35.7-48.5), followed by people who injected drugs in the past year (29.8%; 95%CI: 23.3-37.1), men who have sex with men (who did not identify as gay) (23.1%; 95%CI: 20.3-26.2), people who reported changing partners/concurrent partners in the past year (22.3%; 95%CI: 19.5-25.4), people who reported past incarceration (21.4%; 95%CI: 17.1-26.3), transgender women/gender diverse people who reported sex with men (18.7%; 95%CI: 14.5-23.7), Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples (14.7%; 95%CI: 11.4-18.8), and people born in a high HIV prevalence country (12.8%; 95%CI: 8.7-18.3).

Conclusion:

Only 1 in 5 adult Australians eligible for an HIV test reported having one in the past year, with low uptake among all priority populations. These data suggest the need for a renewed focus on strategies to make HIV testing more accessible.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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