

National surveillance of home-based HIV testing among Australian gay and bisexual men, 2018-2020: uptake after commercial availability of HIV self-tests

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Background:

HIV self-testing allows people to collect samples and test themselves at home, addressing known barriers to facility-based testing. Despite strong evidence about its benefits, HIV self-testing only became commercially available in Australia in a restricted way at the end of 2018. We aimed to measure the uptake of home HIV testing among Australian gay and bisexual men (GBM) between 2018-2020.

Methods:

Data were analysed from the Australian Gay Community Periodic Surveys (repeated behavioural surveillance of GBM at venues, events and online). We used Poisson regression models to assess trends in home HIV testing among non-HIV positive GBM between 2018 and 2020 and multivariable logistic regression to assess factors associated with home versus facility-based testing.

Results:

Overall, the use of home HIV testing was low, but slightly increased during 2018-2020 (from 0.3% to 0.8%, RR=1.54, 95%CI=1.23-1.92, p-trend<0.001). Testing at home was more likely among non-HIV-positive GBM who were born overseas and recently arrived in Australia, and at higher risk of HIV, infrequent HIV testers.

Conclusion:

Given the greater use of home testing in infrequent testers, recent migrants and men at higher risk of HIV, all priority groups in Australia's HIV epidemic, the focus should be on enabling target HIV self-testing implementation, to enhance uptake in these and other groups of GBM.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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