

Ordering Herpes Simplex Virus Type Specific Serology For Asymptomatic Patients: General Practitioner Knowledge, Attitudes & Practice

Comminos NB1,2, Devkota A 1, 2, Walls M¹, Zablotska-Manos I1,2, Sawleshwarkar S1,2

1Western Sydney Sexual Health Centre, Western Sydney Local Health District. Parramatta, New South Wales, Australia



2Westmead Clinical School, University of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. No conflicts of interest



BACKGROUND

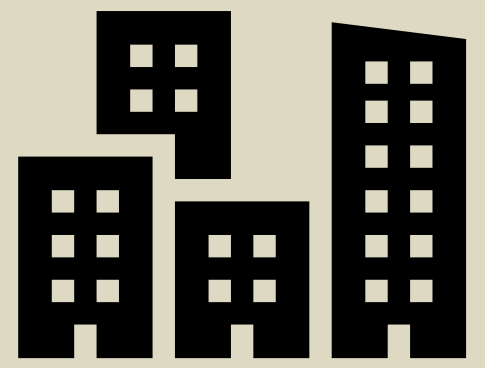
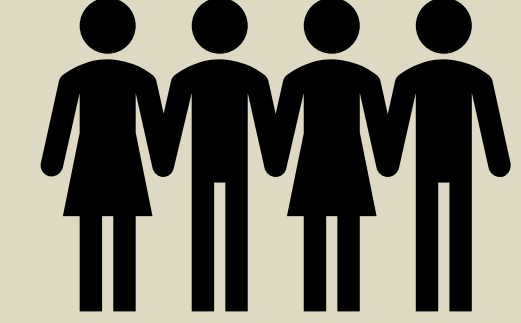
Herpes Simplex Virus serology for asymptomatic, non-pregnant individuals ('HSV-A') is not routinely recommended in Australia.

We explored General Practitioner (GP) knowledge, attitudes & practices regarding HSVs-A to inform GP education & patient care

METHODS

Anonymous online surveys were promoted to currently practicing GPs through 4 NSW primary health networks between 1/2/2023-30/4/2023. Ratings and Likert scales examined experience, confidence and testing patterns/practices. Ethics approval: WSLHD

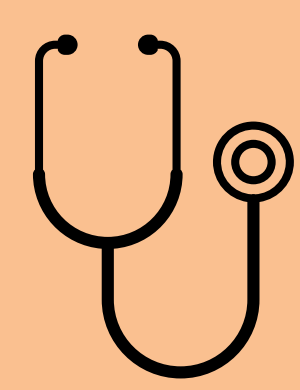
34 surveys completed

27 metro/outer-metro 
 **20** female

17 aged 50-64 years ;10, 4 & 3 aged 35-49, 65+ & 20-34, respectively.

11 had 10-19 years' experience in General Practice, **10** had 30+, **7** had 20-29, **6** had <10.

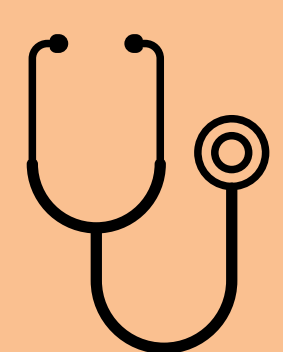
15 GPs had ever ordered HSVs in asymptomatic patients



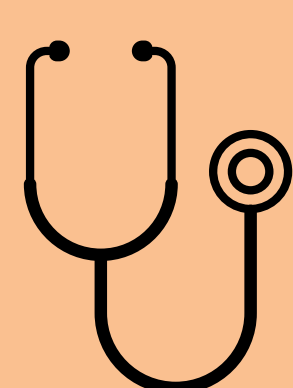
10 'less than annually' **5** 'sometimes' (annually to monthly)

7 had ordered HSVs-A in the past year

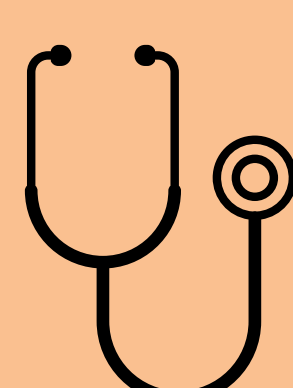
Main reason for ordering: '*assessing whether the patient is at-risk from partner(s) with known/suspected genital herpes*' (7 respondents), '*patient request*' (6), '*guideline recommendations*' (1). Other reasons (select multiple): '*patient request*' (6), '*determining a cause of previously reported symptoms*' (1).



Main reason for not ordering: '*doesn't provide clinically useful information*' ('not useful', 11 respondents), '*results may cause anxiety/distress/more harm than benefit*' ('anxiety', 4), '*not accurate/reliable enough*' (1), '*not recommended in guidelines*' (1), '*difficult to interpret*' (1). Other reasons: '*anxiety*' (11), '*not recommended in guidelines*' (10), '*difficult to interpret*' (5), '*not useful*' (4), '*cost to system*' (4), '*not accurate/reliable*' (1)



17 did not know whether practice colleagues ordered HSVs-A.



9 were aware of ≥ 1 ordering colleague

Key reasons for ordering: '*patient request*' (3), '*don't know/remember*' (4).

Conclusion: Confidence interpreting results may influence ordering practices. Improved guideline promotion/awareness, education & patient counselling resources are priorities.