



AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION  
OF AIDS ORGANISATIONS  
Leading the community response to HIV

# Point-of-Care and Home-Based HIV Testing

**Satellite Session: HIV Testing-Four ways**

**Australasian HIV&AIDS Conference  
19 September 2019**

Ben Wilcock | Manager, Digital Campaigns

# Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO)

- National federation for the HIV community response in Australia.
- AFAO's members are the AIDS Councils in each state and territory; the National Association of People with HIV Australia (NAPWHA); the Australian Injecting & Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL); Anwernekenhe National HIV Alliance (ANA); and Scarlet Alliance, Australian Sex Workers Association.
- AFAO also has a range of affiliate member organisations – spanning community, research and clinical workforce.

# Overview

- Background and history to the availability of Point-of-Care (PoC) and home-based HIV testing in Australia
- HIV testing in the context of comprehensive STI testing
- Considerations for different populations and communities in relation to these different types of HIV testing

## Point-of-Care (PoC) HIV tests

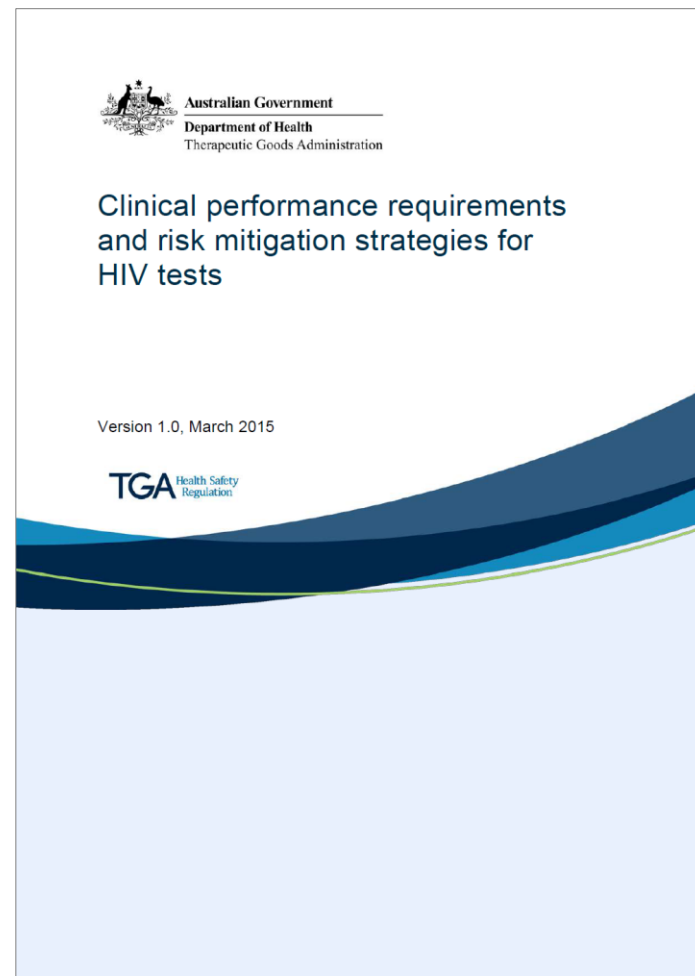
- Following studies in several states
- Changes to National HIV Testing Policy
- First PoC HIV test approved by the TGA in December 2012
- Other PoC tests approved in 2015
- For use by health professionals, including peer testers
- Addresses many barriers to testing

## Point-of-Care (PoC) HIV tests

- Establishment of several community-based testing services primarily for men who have sex with men (MSM) by AFAO's members and related organisations
- Helping address further barriers to testing among these communities
- Various models

# TGA Guidance

- In 2015, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) published the *Clinical performance requirements and risk mitigation strategies for HIV tests*
- For laboratory, PoC and self-tests



## HIV self-testing – regulatory and policy context

- Until June 2014, regulatory restrictions had previously excluded HIV self-tests from being able to be assessed by the TGA
- ASHM's updated *National HIV Testing Policy* was released in 2017, which supported HIV self-tests for personal use

## HIV self-testing – Australian evidence

- The FORTH (Frequency of Oral Rapid Testing at Home) study conducted by the Kirby Institute:
  - A two-times increase in frequency of testing in gay and bisexual men at high risk of infection, and a nearly four times increase in non-recent testers, compared with standard care (non-recent testers = tested more than two years ago or never tested)
  - No reduction in the frequency of facility-based HIV testing
  - No decline in other STI testing
  - Highly acceptable
  - Free test kits



# HIV self-testing – availability

- On 28 November 2018, the TGA approved the first HIV self-test for sale in Australia
- Atomo HIV self-test
- Available for sale on 4 April 2019
- Currently restricted to be sold online (Atomo website), and can also be distributed or sold by organisations such as AIDS Councils
- Atomo website - \$25 (plus postage)



# HIV testing - self-collection

- Dried Blood Spot (DBS) test
- DBS study by NSW Health
  - NSW DBS HIV and Hepatitis C Test Program
  - Targeting a range of populations, including CALD people
  - few drops of blood self-collected in private
  - DBS test sent in a reply paid envelope
  - Laboratory test
  - Receive the result by phone, text or email.



# Comprehensive sexual health testing

- Concerns with new testing technologies, particularly home-based testing, about decoupling of HIV and other STI testing
- Though this wasn't shown in FORTH study
- However, we still need continued education about comprehensive sexual health testing

# Considerations for different populations

- Some examples:
  - PoC and self-tests have slightly higher rates of false-positives – may not be as suitable for lower prevalence populations (higher chance of false-positives)
  - Testing can be complex for some populations that may not have a contemporary understanding of HIV (e.g. CALD communities), so any promotion of testing can't be in isolation of broader discussions and education about HIV
  - Remote communities – availability of nearby services for confirmatory testing and linkage to care
  - Sex workers – potential for misuse in a work environment
- Communities that HIV testing technologies could be targeted to need to be central to informing the effectiveness and acceptability of these technologies for them, and the education of these communities