

PREFERENCES AND ACCEPTABILITY OF TESTING FOR SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS IN AN HIV PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS CLINIC IN HANOI, VIETNAM

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Background:

Men who have sex with men (MSM) on HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) have high rates of STIs. Understanding STI testing preferences and the acceptability of self-collected specimens are important for improving uptake of STI testing. We assessed acceptability of self-collection for STI testing and used conjoint analysis to identify factors associated with preferences for STI testing among MSM who use PrEP in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Methods:

From January to December 2023, we recruited MSM aged ≥ 16 years and enrolled in the HIV PrEP program at the Sexual Health Promotion clinic in Hanoi, Vietnam. Study participants self-collected pharyngeal, anal, and urine samples for Chlamydia trachomatis and Neisseria gonorrhoeae testing. Data were collected on behaviors, experience and acceptability with sample self-collection, and testing preferences. For conjoint analysis, eight hypothetical C. trachomatis/N. gonorrhoeae testing profiles were created varying across five testing attributes, with two options each. Participants rated each profile using Likert preference scales (1 to 5). An impact score was generated for each attribute by taking the difference between the two scores. A two-sided one-sample t-test was used to assess for differences and generate p values.

Results:

In total, 529 participants out of 591 men who were referred to study, were included. The median age was 25.1 years (IQR: 21.7-29.5). Specimens from all three sites were provided by 97.9% (518/529). Mean satisfaction with self-collection was 4.3 (range 1-5; SD 1.0), and 99.4% reported they would perform again. Conjoint analysis revealed that cost (free vs. US\$17) had the highest impact on preference (Impact Score: 25.2; $p < 0.001$).

Conclusion:

There was high acceptability of sample self-collection for STI screening among MSM on PrEP in Vietnam. The findings indicate that testing cost was the most important factor

for testing uptake. Self-collection and lower testing cost for STIs could promote uptake of STI screening among MSM.

Conflict of Interest:

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