

Impacts of COVID-19 on Access to HIV Testing among Two- Spirit, Gay, Bisexual, & Queer Men in Manitoba



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This analysis examined the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to sexual health services and HIV testing among 2SGBQ+ men in Manitoba.

Study Design: This project was designed as an exploratory, sequential (quantitative → qualitative) mixed-methods, community-based research study. Findings presented here are from the quantitative phase (survey).

Recruitment & Sampling: Participants ($n = 347$) for the online survey were recruited in Manitoba using online and offline means – flyers at community organizations, social media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram), and our lab website (www.villagelab.ca)

Village Lab

Manitoba COVID-19
and 2SGBQ+ Men's
Health Study

Are you a Two-Spirit, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Cis or Trans guy, or a guy who has sex with other guys?

We are interested in learning about your experiences during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Manitoba 2SGBQ+ Men's Health Study, which is part of the Village Lab at Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba, is now recruiting 2SGBQ+ men who live or work in Manitoba to complete a short online survey about their experiences related to mental health, substance use, and accessing care throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Access the survey by clicking this link covid-survey.villagelab.ca

If you do not have internet access or prefer to complete this survey by phone, please call and leave a voicemail at the following phone number and we will contact you to schedule a phone interview: 204-474-6743

For more information about this study, visit www.villagelab.ca or contact Dr. Rusty Souleymanov, Principal Investigator, at 204-474-6743 or by email at: rusty.souleymanov@umanitoba.ca.

You will receive \$35.00 upon completion of the survey

PARTICIPATION IS CONFIDENTIAL



Data Analysis:

Logistic regression analyses assessed the relationship between socio-demographics/social determinants of health (age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, income, education, geographic location, relationship status) and the impact of COVID-19 on reduced access to HIV testing (analytic outcome).



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Results: Factors Associated with Reduced Access to HIV Testing in Manitoba

Among 347 participants, **27.7%** reported that COVID-19 affected their access to HIV testing in Manitoba.

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION: Living in Brandon, medium size city of 30,000 to 49,000 people ($AOR = 11.58$, $95\%CI = 3.48 - 38.48$) and living in rural and remote areas with less than 1,000 people ($AOR = 25.19$, $95\%CI = 1.98 - 32.01$) compared to living in Winnipeg, were both associated with higher odds of reporting a reduced access to HIV testing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

RELATIONSHIP STATUS: Participants who were dating (compared to those who were married or partnered) were also significantly more likely to report a reduced access to HIV testing ($AOR=6.07$, $95\%CI:2.06-14.95$).

1. Healthcare services must be prepared to respond to the impact of COVID-19 on HIV testing among sexually active 2SGBQ+ men, as well as 2SGBQ+ men who live in medium size cities or rural and remote areas in Manitoba.
2. Rural providers should be encouraged to routinely offer HIV screening to 2SGBQ+ men throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Targeted interventions are also needed to remove structural barriers to HIV testing in smaller and rural communities for both the pandemic and the post-pandemic periods.

Discussion and Conclusions

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Thank you!

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