

Home HIV Testing and Medical Care: Doing the Right Thing

Charulata Sabharwal MD MPH, Sharmila Shah MPH, Chi-Chi Udeagu MPH

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Queens, New York

Background

- HIV testing is the initial, critical step for people with HIV into the continuum of care
- Approval of the home HIV test in July 2012 expanded the accessibility of HIV testing to groups who do not test in traditional venues.
- However, concerns have been raised over the home HIV test's cost (39.99USD), uptake, and users' willingness to seek confirmatory testing and linkage to care

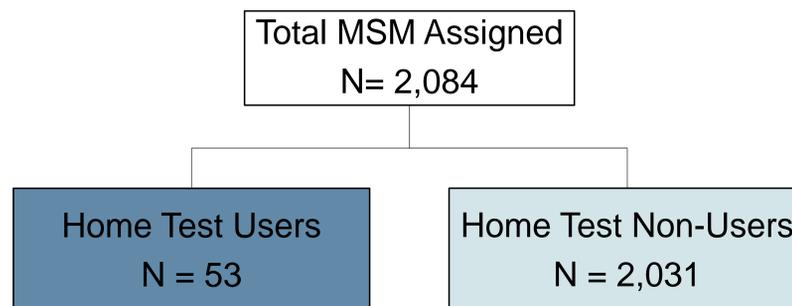
Study Objectives

- Assess the home HIV test's acceptability, uptake, and user willingness to seek confirmatory testing and linkage to care among New York City men who have sex with men (MSM).

Methods

- New York City health department offers partner services and linkage to care to all persons newly diagnosed with HIV city-wide.
- Since 2013, home HIV test use has been systematically collected for all persons assigned to receive partner services.
- Demographic and behavioral characteristics were compared among newly HIV diagnosed MSM who reported home test use to MSM who did not, January 2013 - July 2014.

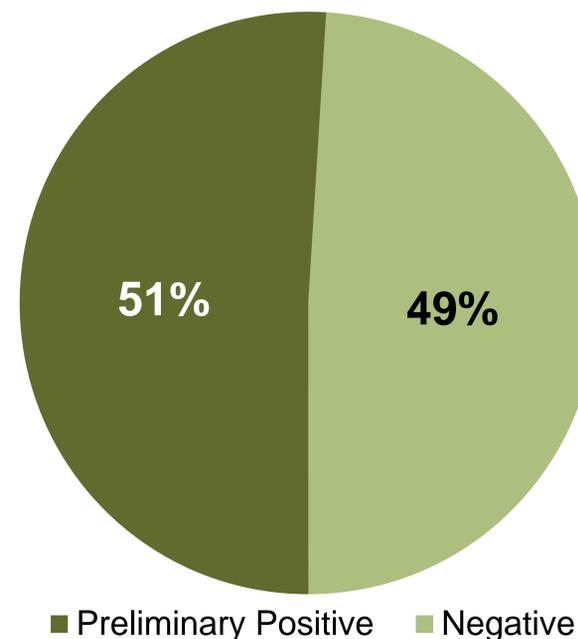
Home Test Use NYC Among MSM Assigned for Partner Services, January 2013 – July 2014



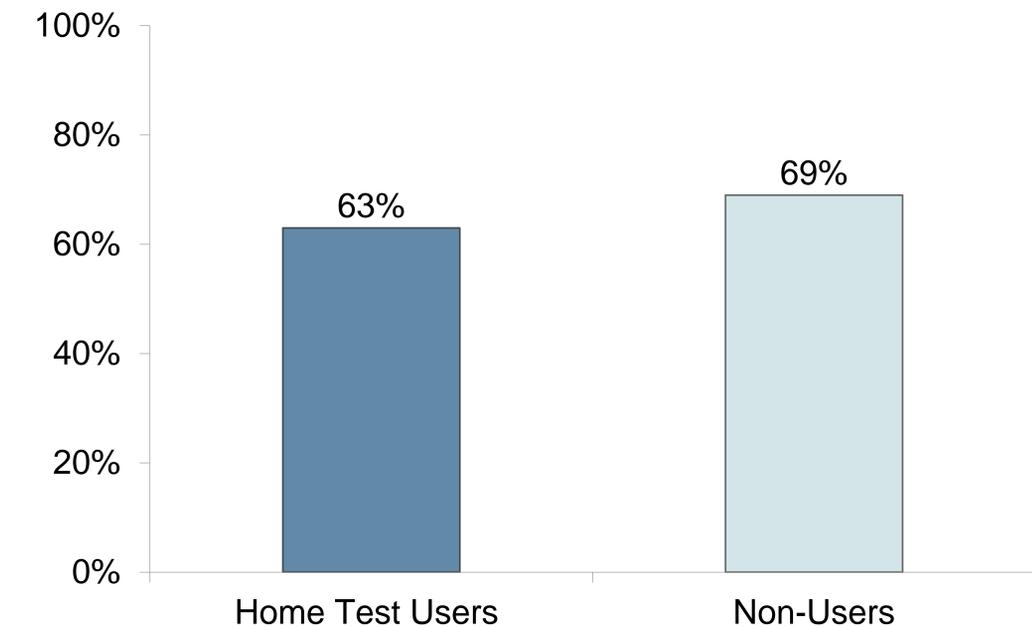
Demographic Characteristics of Newly HIV Diagnosed NYC MSM Who Were Home Test Users vs. Non-Users

	Home Testing Users	Home Testing Non-Users	p-value
Median Age (years)	32	32	0.818
Race			
White, non-Hispanic	43%	25%	0.007
Black, non-Hispanic	23%	37%	
Hispanic	23%	31%	
Other/Unknown	11%	8%	
Attended College/ Graduate School	71%	48%	0.002
Tested HIV negative within past 12 months	83%	62%	0.002
Ever Incarcerated	4%	9%	0.002
Acute HIV Diagnosis	2%	6%	0.175

Home HIV Test Results Among Home Test Users (N=53)



Timely (Within 3 Months of Diagnosis) Linkage to Care Among Home Test Users vs. Non-Users



Conclusions

- Many high-risk MSM in NYC who reported home HIV test use are routine testers as opposed to infrequent or never testers.
- MSM who home-tested preliminary positive sought medical attention for confirmatory testing and linkage to care.
- The lower uptake among MSM of color compared to white MSM requires further investigation but may reflect socioeconomic differences.
- The NYC health department is addressing the issue of cost by offering home HIV test kits to HIV exposed partners who decline testing in traditional settings.
- Wider home testing for some risk groups may require free or lower cost kits.