

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR MSS222R

Objective. To assess the utilization of in-home HIV testing among men who have sex with men (MSM) in Hong Kong, focusing on their access/ attitude to, and awareness/ perception of the tests.

Design / settings. A two-phase study was designed. In the first phase an on-line survey was conducted through the application of a bilingual questionnaire that covered demographics; awareness of in-home self HIV tests; knowledge of HIV diagnosis and treatment; familiarity with HIV services; and understanding of HIV related behaviours. This was followed by a second phase qualitative study involving testers and non-testers, through focus groups and individual interviews.

Participants. MSM were enrolled online following a series of promotion activities: (1) posting appeals on 2 gay online discussion boards in Hong Kong; (2) placing advertisements in Google Hong Kong; (3) setting up web banners in gay mobile social networking apps; and (4) sending out email invitations. Completion of the survey entitled one to an incentive.

Results. 1122 MSM joined the on-line survey while the qualitative study was participated by 8 ever-testers, 7 never-testers and 5 self-testers for in-home self HIV tests. The study revealed a low usage (6.1 %) and moderate acceptability (43.8 %) of in-home testing despite its availability in the market. Hierarchical logistic regression models showed that having received relevant information and the users' attitudes were the main determinants of its use and acceptability. These factors had greater effects than sexual behaviours and social networking on MSM's decision on self-testing. Overall, very few MSM had reported having heard about self-testing and some were skeptical about their accuracy. Although most participants acknowledged the privacy provided by self-testing, this advantage was outweighed by their intense fear of facing the test results alone and the uncertainties regarding HIV treatments and supports. For the self-testers, some were not satisfied with the current testing and counselling services; while others saw self-testing not as a health check, but a convenient means to psychological comfort from proving one's HIV negativity. Even if they had doubts about the accuracy of the test, they were not inclined to go for another HIV test after a negative result.

Conclusions. At the time of this study, in-home self-testing was uncommon. If effectively implemented, such testing could potentially reduce late diagnosis and contribute to population control of virus transmission. Continuous monitoring and pragmatic regulations on the use of self-testing are however needed.

PUBLICATIONS

- Wong HTH, Tam HY, Chan DPC, Lee SS. Usage and acceptability of HIV self-testing in men who have sex with men in Hong Kong. *AIDS Beh* 2014; 19(3):505-15.