

FOCUS TESTING POTENTIAL ONLINE SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STI) AND BLOOD BORNE VIRUSES (BBV) TESTING MODELS WITH PRIORITY POPULATIONS IN NSW.

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Background/Purpose:

Several studies have been conducted internationally to assess the acceptability and feasibility of various online sexual health models. Studies indicate that internet-based testing is viewed as being acceptable and is preferred over clinic testing by many individuals. However, most of these studies have been conducted in the USA or UK and targeted local priority populations e.g., Hispanic. There is little evidence on what would make an online testing service acceptable to priority populations in the Australian context.

Study objectives:

1. Identify/understand the enablers/barriers to STI/BBV testing experienced by each priority population.
2. Identify key elements that would facilitate increased acceptability/accessibility, and use of an online testing platform.

Approach:

Focus test potential online STI/BBV testing models with priority populations residing in NSW. Models to be focus tested include pathology collection vs self-sampling models, and a telehealth assessment vs online assessment model. Priority populations include rural/remote/regional people, Aboriginal people, IDUs, sex workers, CALD people, trans/gender diverse people, MSM, and young people under thirty.

Focus testing will be conducted online. There will be a discussion group for each priority population. Sample size being 8 to 12 participants per discussion group. Criteria, self-identify as a member of a priority population, aged 18 years or older, have access to the internet and/or smart device, and can comprehend/communicate in English. The qualitative data generated from the discussion groups will be analysed using Thematic Analysis.

Study has been approved by Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council HREC (2063/23), and ACON RERC (2023/01).

Outcomes/Impact:

Focus groups will be conducted in early July 2023. Focus testing findings will be presented at the conference.

Innovation and Significance:

Focus testing findings will contribute to informing the development of an online STI/BBV testing model for NSW populations. Findings will also contribute to the gap in evidence for Australian priority populations.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:
Nothing to disclose.