

Remote Aboriginal-led primary care services integrate testing for sexually transmitted infections into comprehensive annual preventive health assessments in regions with highest prevalence

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Background

The multi-jurisdictional response to the syphilis outbreak affecting remote Aboriginal communities includes priority actions to increase testing.

Annual health assessments incentivised for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people under Medicare Item 715 provide an opportunity for routine STI testing in primary care.

We examined integration and completeness of STI testing within health assessments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 16–29 years in Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.

Aims

- To assess what proportion of health assessments conducted in Indigenous young people aged 16 – 29 in ACCHS integrate an STI test
- To assess what proportion of STI tests conducted in Indigenous young people in ACCHS as part of a 715 health assessment are comprehensive (inclusive of HIV, chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis)
- To identify correlates of integration of STI testing into the 715 health assessment in Indigenous young people attending ACCHS

Methods

Using routinely collected electronic medical record data from a national sentinel surveillance system (ATLAS), we performed a cross-sectional analysis to calculate the proportion of 715 health assessment conducted among Indigenous young people aged 16 – 29 attending ACCHS that had any or all of tests for chlamydia/gonorrhoea (CT/NG), syphilis and HIV completed within one day of the 715 health assessment.

We allowed for one day as some investigations attached to a health assessment may be conducted on subsequent days to the initial consultation.

We conducted univariate logistic regression to identify correlates of integration of any STI test into a 715 health assessment. Backwards-selection technique was used to finalise the multivariable model. Participant age, sex, area of residence, SEIFA-IRSD index of socioeconomic advantage and disadvantage, and year of consultation were considered as potential correlates.

Conclusions

Integration of STI testing into health assessments is higher in regions where disease burden is greatest. Increased testing in very remote regions reflects targeted impact of health promotion and other components of the multi-jurisdictional syphilis response.

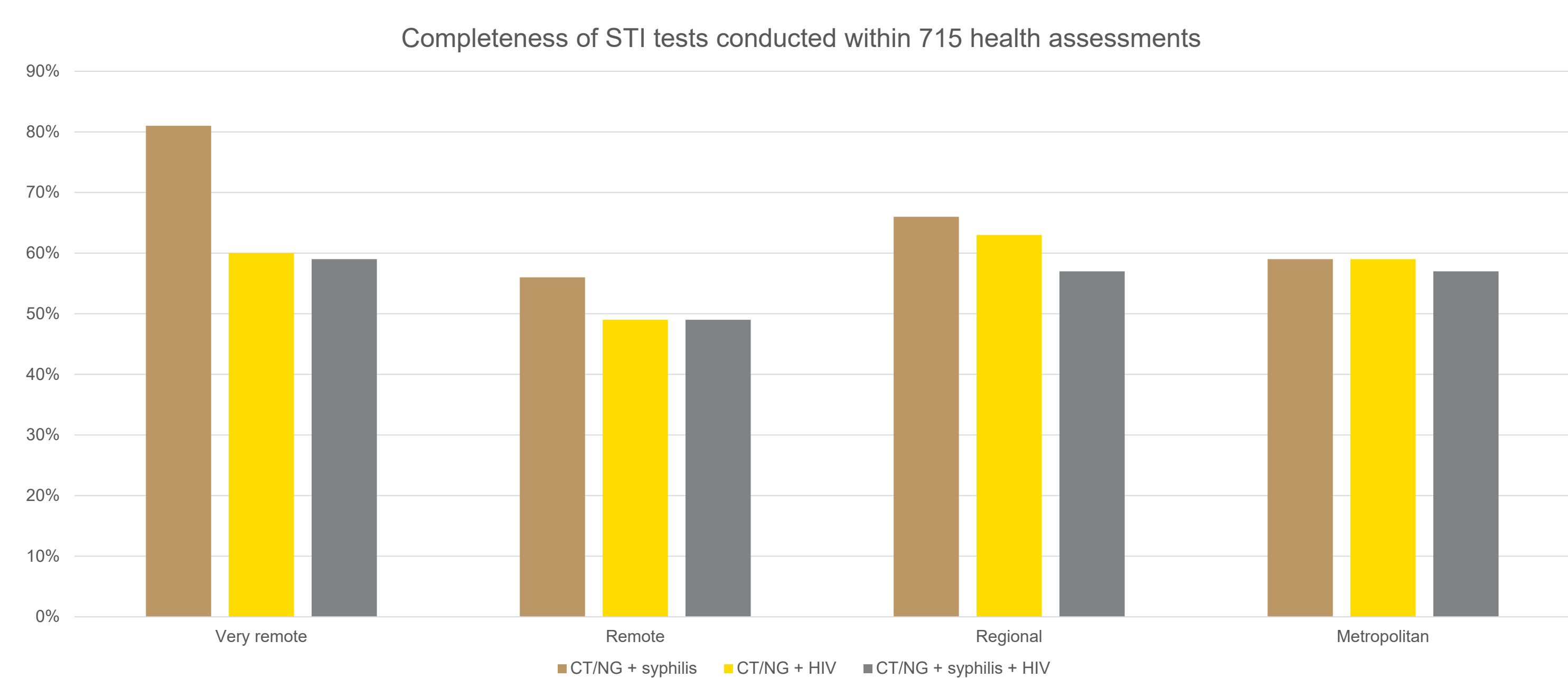
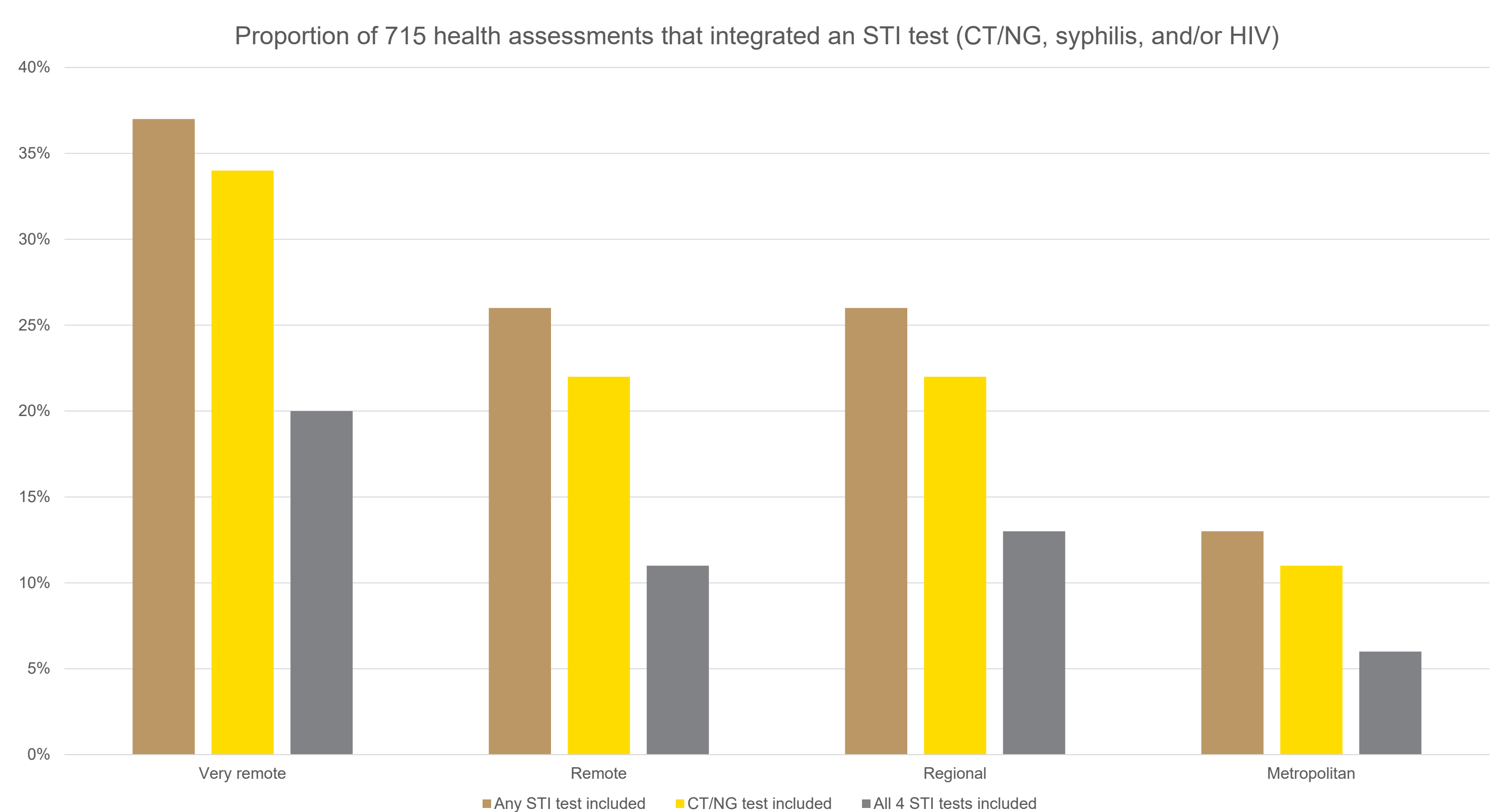
While only a small proportion of total health assessments included a HIV test, over half that included a chlamydia/gonorrhoea test also included HIV, indicating that integration of STI screening into 715 health assessments is likely to be comprehensive.

While most studies have found higher testing among women, integration of testing into health assessments is similar for men and women.

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Results

Of 13,892 health assessments conducted with Indigenous young people aged 16 – 29 in ACCHS between 2018 - 2020, 11.5% included tests for all four STIs and 23.9% included a test for any STI. Very remote regions recorded higher STI testing within the 715 health assessment. Of health assessments that included a CT/NG test, 59% also included HIV and 57% also included both syphilis and HIV, and completeness was slightly higher for men than women. In the multivariate model, integration of an STI test into a 715 health assessment was associated with patient aged over 20 years, SEIFA – IRSD 3 – 4, and remoteness. There was no association with patient sex.



Correlates of having an STI test conducted within one day of a 715 health assessment

Category	Breakdown	Univariate analysis		Multivariate analysis	
		Odds Ratio (95%CI)	p-value	Odds Ratio (95%CI)	p-value
Year	2018	1		1	
	2019	1.00 (0.92, 1.09)	0.956	1.02 (0.94, 1.11)	0.621
	2020	0.68 (0.59, 0.78)	<0.001	0.72 (0.62, 0.83)	<0.001
Age group	16 – 19	1		1	
	20 – 24	1.25 (1.13, 1.38)	<0.001	1.29 (1.17, 1.43)	<0.001
	25 - 29	1.13 (1.02, 1.25)	0.015	1.15 (1.04, 1.28)	0.007
Sex	Male	1.08 (1.0, 1.16)	0.070	-	
	Female	1		-	
Remoteness	Very remote	4.17 (3.65, 4.77)	<0.001	4.37 (3.81, 5.03)	<0.001
	Remote	2.44 (2.13, 2.80)	<0.001	2.12 (1.84, 2.44)	<0.001
	Regional	2.51 (2.15, 2.80)	<0.001	2.67 (2.39, 2.98)	<0.001
	Metro	1		1	
SEIFA - IRSD	1 – 2	1		1	
	3 -4	1.99 (1.80, 2.20)	<0.001	2.10 (1.88, 2.32)	<0.001
	5+	1.26 (1.14, 1.39)	<0.001	1.50 (1.35, 1.66)	<0.001