

INCIDENCE AND PREDICTORS OF RECENT HIV TESTING AMONG GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN IN AUSTRALIA WHO WERE NEVER TESTED FOR HIV: RESULTS FROM THE FLUX STUDY

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Background:

Approximately 9% of HIV-positive gay and bisexual men (GBM) in Australia are undiagnosed. Concerns remain about the extent to which untested GBM are a risk for onward transmission. We report, for the first time, HIV testing incidence among previously untested men in a community-based cohort study and factors associated with non-HIV testing.

Methods:

The Flux Study is a national, online prospective observational study of Australian GBM. 1,711 GBM were followed at 6-monthly intervals for 24 months.

Time varying variables were considered as predictors for HIV non-testing. Incidence rate ratios (IRR) and their corresponding 95% confidence intervals (CI) were presented.

Results:

Among 190 men with no history of HIV testing at baseline and no use of HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), we compared those who were and were not tested during follow-up. Of these 190 men, just over half (51.1%) first tested for HIV during follow up, for an incidence rate of 33.4 per 100 PY. Just under half (48.9%) remained untested at 24-month follow-up.

Of men who had never had an HIV test, 16.1% reported engaging in condomless anal intercourse (CLAI) with casual partners. At a univariate level, CLAI with casual partners was significant ($p < 0.01$).

In multivariate analysis, scoring lower on the Gay Social Engagement Scale ($p = 0.03$), having fewer sexual partners ($p < 0.01$), and being less likely to engage in either group sex ($p < 0.01$) or receptive CLAI with fuckbuddies ($p < 0.01$) were independently associated with never being tested for HIV.

Conclusion:

Although GBM who have never been tested may be at risk of transmitting HIV to their partners if they become HIV-infected, these data indicate that they are less likely to be engaging in high risk sexual activity. Little is known about the men who remain untested despite having engaged in risky behaviours, but testing campaigns need to focus on this group.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

The Flux Study is funded by an Australian Research Council Discovery Project. In 2018, this study was partly funded by the Gilead Australia Fellowship: Research Grants Program. Gilead Australia Fellowship had no input in the data collection, analysis, interpretation, or presentation of any findings.