

1. Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Stellenbosch University, Cape Town, South Africa.
2. Department of Health Research Methods, Evidence, and Impact (formerly the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics), McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

## Introduction

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) epidemic continues to remain a major public health concern among vulnerable populations globally and among the adolescent and youth populations Schwetz et al (2019). HIV continues to be the dominant cause of death among adolescents and young adults in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and HIV testing remains key to HIV prevention, care and support Ssewanyana et al (2019). Despite susceptibility and risk of HIV infection in adolescents and youth, access to HIV testing and counselling remains low.

This study aimed to determine the uptake of HIV testing among adolescents and youth aged 10 – 24 years attending secondary schools in Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa.

## Objectives

1. To ascertain the status of HIV testing and counselling in adolescents and youth in Cape Town Western Cape province and Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, in South Africa.
2. To explore the variables that are associated with HIV testing among adolescents and youth in the study population.

## Data and Methods

This study followed a cross-sectional design. Two-stage cluster sampling was implemented.

Data were collected from 647 adolescents and youth in randomly selected secondary schools in two South African cities, Cape Town, and Johannesburg.

The participants were aged 13 to 24 years. A validated supervised self-administered questionnaire was used. Data were summarized using frequencies and percentages.

## Discussion

This study showed that the current uptake of HIV testing among adolescents and youths is low.

Increasing the knowledge of adolescents and youth on HIV prevention and care can help to improve the uptake of HIV testing in this age group in South Africa.

To increase the uptake of HIV testing and counselling in this age group, the conventional HTC methods being used for HIV testing in adult populations are inadequate.

The study would guide policymakers on adequate, innovative and youth-friendly HIV testing methods suitable for adolescents and young people.

## Results

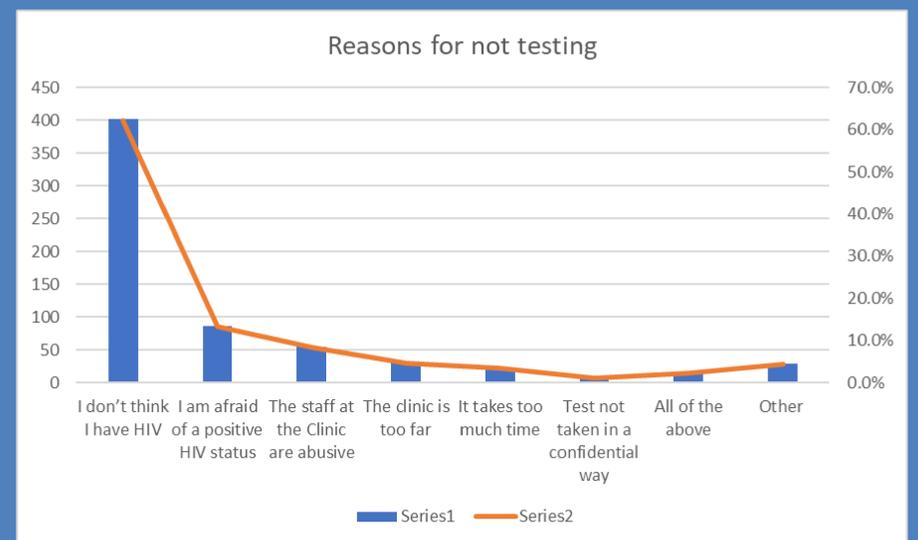


Figure 1: Reasons for not testing for HIV

## Percentage of those who have ever tested for HIV

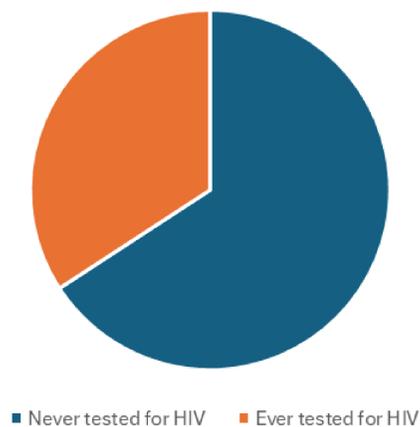


Figure 2 Percentage of those who have ever tested for HIV

## Conclusion

This study ascertained the current uptake of HIV testing and counselling among adolescents and youths. Reasons why young people in this age group test for HIV and why others fail to test were also recognized. The findings of this study can greatly help to improve the uptake of HIV testing and counselling among adolescents and youth in South Africa by positively guiding policymakers on adequate interventions to embark upon to increase the number of HIV tests in this age group.

## References

- Schwetz TA, Fauci AS. The extended impact of human immunodeficiency virus/AIDS research. *J Infect Dis.* 2019;219(1):6–9.
- Ssewanyana D, Mwangala PN, Van Baar A, Newton CR, Abubakar A. Health risk behaviour among adolescents living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *BioMed research international.* 2018;2018(1):7375831.