

Service Provider HIV Self-Testing National Survey Results: Knowledge, Access, Usability, Supports, and Barriers

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Introduction

- **HIV self-testing** allows people to take an HIV test and find out their result in their own home or other private location
- Following the approval of Canada's first HIV self-test on November 3rd, 2020, the engagement of front-line agencies is key to ensuring HIV self-testing is accessible for all Canadians
- Utilizing self-testing along with mobile health technologies for linkage to care will be critical for ending the HIV epidemic in Canada
- **Goal:** examine service provider perspectives on HIV self-testing, including access, usability and supports in Canada and impact of COVID-19 on HIV services

Methods

- An observational study of front-line workers involved in HIV support and care was conducted online from August 6, 2020 to September 1, 2020
- 294 participants were surveyed through local and regional community-based organizations across Canada via email list serves (see Table 1)
- Surveys assessed knowledge, access, usability, supports, and barriers of HIV self-testing and mobile health for front-line organizations
- 48/278 (17.2%) of respondents self-reported an HIV-positive status

Table 1 Participant characteristics

Variable	n	(%)
Province (n=289)		
Alberta	50	17
British Columbia	40	14
Manitoba	50	17
New Brunswick	3	1
NFLD	11	4
Nova Scotia	17	6
Ontario	94	33
PEI	3	1
Quebec	15	5
Saskatchewan	6	2
Position at Workplace* (n=289)		
Health promotion	76	24
Frontline worker	75	26
Nurse	54	19
Manager/ coordinator	51	18
Harm reduction	36	12
Executive director	29	10
Peer worker	27	9
Researcher	27	9
Health care provider	26	9
Other	24	8
Volunteer	17	6
Certified HIV tester	16	6

*Positions at workplace are not mutually exclusive

Results

Perspectives and opinions about HIV self-testing



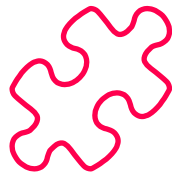
32%

Are **well informed** about HIVST
(57% indicated being
“moderately informed”)



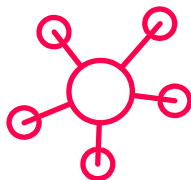
93%

Indicated that HIV self-
testing will **increase**
diagnosis rate



97%

Indicated HIV self-testing will
be an **important tool to end**
the HIV epidemic in Canada

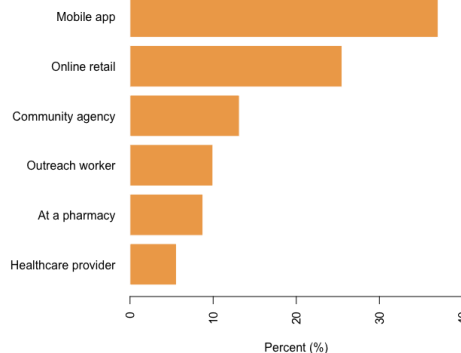


85%

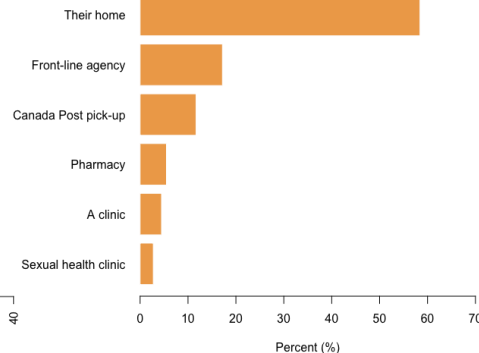
Think a **national policy** will
facilitate **access** to HIV self-
testing

Client access, linkage to care & support

Preference for **ORDERING**
an HIV self-test



Preference for **DELIVERY**
of HIV self-test



62%

Thought clients would like
someone present for the first time
they use an HIV self-test



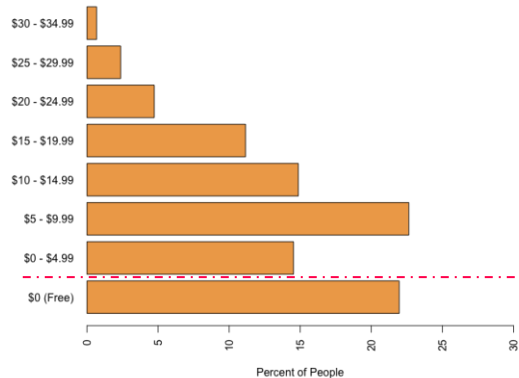
75%

Comfortable accessing HIV
support and counselling
online

Results

Cost, guidance, and policies

How much would clients spend?



Most participants (90%) thought HIV self-tests should cost under \$20



97%

thought their clients **would pass along** an HIV self-test to a friend, family member, or sexual partner

Average reported impact of COVID-19 among agencies delivering HIV testing and services

Service	Impact by COVID-19
HIV testing	-47% ▼
HIV counselling	-30% ▼
STBBI testing	-40% ▼
PrEP	-27% ▼
ARV (HIV medications)	-9% ▼
Mental health	-18% ▼
Harm reduction service	-14% ▼

Conclusions

Service providers believe HIV self-testing is critical to reach and support those undiagnosed with HIV



Strong support for mobile and online technology for HIV self-testing and linkage to care



A national policy is needed for HIV self-testing with resources to support those who need it most



There is strong support for community readiness and access to HIV self-testing



COVID-19 has negatively affected access to HIV/STBBI testing and health services