

# Interest in alternative sexual health service delivery methods during the COVID-19 pandemic in British Columbia

**Aidan Ablona<sup>1</sup>, Hsiu-Ju Chang<sup>1</sup>, Gina Ogilvie<sup>1</sup>, Troy Grennan<sup>1</sup>, Jason Wong<sup>1</sup>, Travis Salway<sup>2</sup>, Devon Haag<sup>1</sup>, Heather Pedersen<sup>1</sup>, Laurence Campeau<sup>3</sup>, Sophie Bannar-Martin<sup>3</sup>, Geoffrey Ford<sup>1</sup>, Daniel Grace<sup>4</sup>, Catherine Worthington<sup>5</sup>, Mark Gilbert<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>BC Centre for Disease Control, <sup>2</sup>Simon Fraser University, <sup>3</sup>Island Health, <sup>4</sup>University of Toronto, <sup>5</sup>University of Victoria

**CAHR Virtual Conference, May 5-7, 2021**

*Conflict of interest Disclosure: I have no conflicts of interest*

E-mail: [hsiju.chang@bccdc.ca](mailto:hsiju.chang@bccdc.ca)



@DiSHIresearch | [DiSHIresearch.com](http://DiSHIresearch.com)





# Background & Methods

## What we know

- Sexual health services have placed greater emphasis on implementing alternative service delivery methods reducing person-to-person contact during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Implementing alternative service delivery methods could also help address one of the strategic goals of the Pan-Canadian STBBI Framework for Action<sup>1</sup>, to improve access to testing, treatment, and ongoing care & support
- We sought to understand the interest in **alternative sexual health service delivery methods** among BC sexual health service clients during the pandemic

## “Sex in the Time of COVID” Survey

- Online, anonymous survey conducted Jul 21-Aug 4, 2020
- Eligibility: Clients  $\geq 16$  years old who had visited the BC Centre for Disease Control’s STI clinic and/or GetCheckedOnline (an internet-based testing service) in the year prior to Mar 2020
- Outcomes: Likelihood of using alternative sexual health service delivery methods, if available
- Analysis: Descriptive statistics

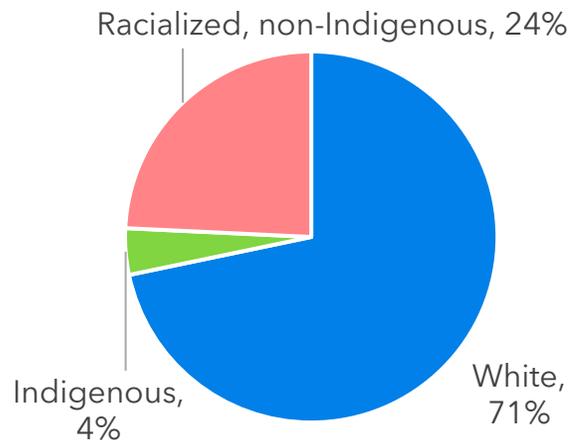


# Participants & Results (N=1198)

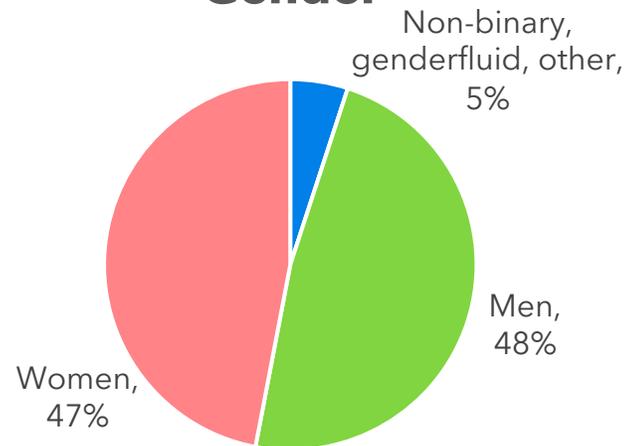
## Demographics

- Median age: 32 years
- 52% straight/heterosexual

### Race/Ethnicity



### Gender



## Results

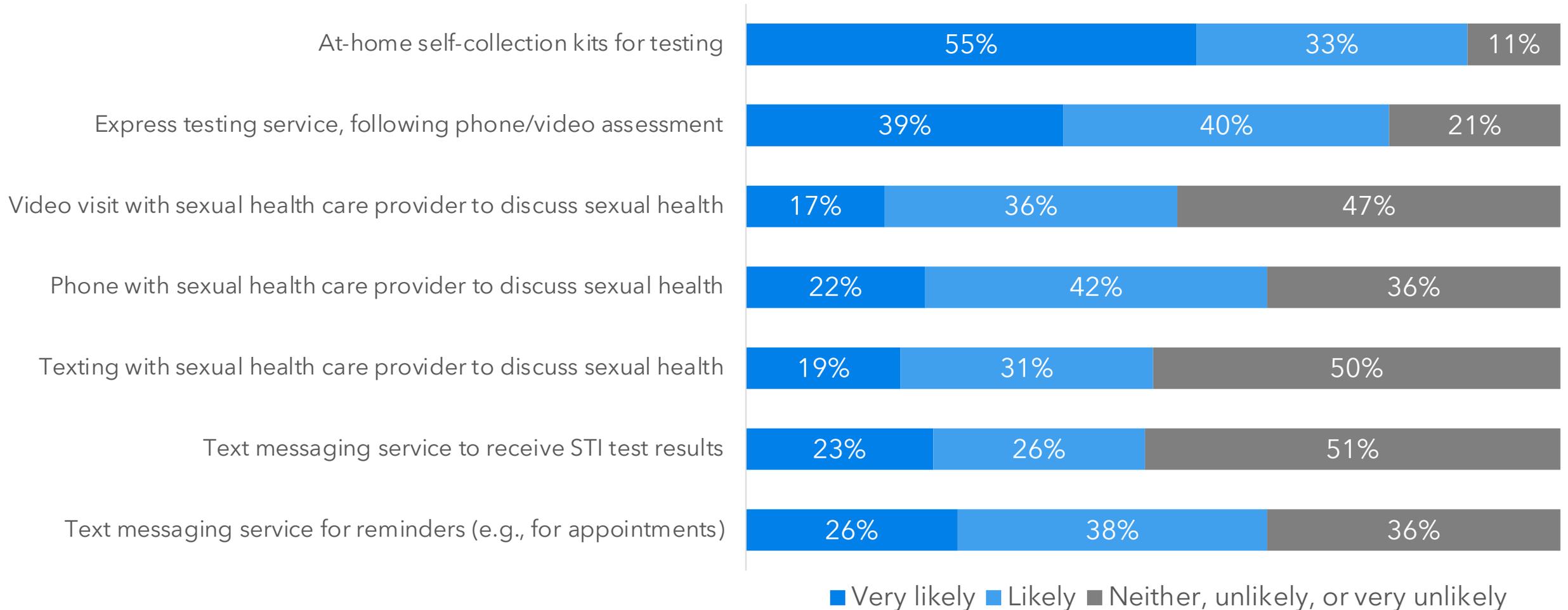
During the COVID-19 pandemic:

- 60% reported being comfortable accessing in-person sexual health services
- 66% avoided/delayed seeking services



# Results (cont'd; N=1198)

## Likelihood of using service, if available





# Discussion

- Likelihood of using alternative methods of sexual health service delivery was high among participants
- Implementation of such services could address COVID-19 related concerns and thus facilitate access to testing, treatment and ongoing care and support during, and beyond, the pandemic