



Accuracy and Acceptability of Oral HIV Self-tests in Kenya

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What is the research about?

Knowing one's HIV status is essential for prevention and treatment. Innovative approaches are needed to encourage persons at risk to test and retest over time. HIV self-testing is one such option, but not yet widely used in low-income country settings including Africa where two-thirds of the world's HIV global disease burden exists.

Why is this important for HIV prevention and treatment?

Awareness of HIV status is key to earlier access to treatment and prevention services. Given the public health implications of unknown HIV status, especially among undiagnosed persons living with HIV, availability of self-testing is one way to increase access to testing and also support retesting efforts, particularly for high risk populations.

What did the researchers do?

Participants were given a kit with instructions to conduct unsupervised, self-administered oral fluid HIV self-

testing. Then, staff administered an oral fluid and rapid fingerstick test. Results were validated using ELISA. Positives were given referrals and a one-month follow-up phone survey to confirm linkage to HIV services.

What did the researchers find?

Among 240 participants enrolled, 81% had sex without a condom in the last month. Of those with a main sex partner, two-thirds said their partners had been tested for HIV, with 7% of partners being HIV-positive. HIV prevalence was 14.6%. HIV self-test sensitivity was 89.7% (95% CI 73–98%) and specificity was 98% (95% CI 89–99%). 94% 'strongly agreed or agreed' that oral HIV self-testing was acceptable. However, there were a number of invalid test results (18.6% men vs. 7.7% women).

How can you use this research?

Findings may guide policy decisions of the Kenyan Ministry of Health on the promotion of HIV self-testing

as an alternative to conventional HIV screening approaches. Our research shows that rollout of self-testing should be accompanied by educational campaigns around appropriate use to reduce invalid results, and to encourage confirmatory testing and linkage to care at a health facility where appropriate.

Original Research Article:

Kurth AE, Cleland CM, Chhun N, Sidle JE, Were E, Naanyu V, Emonyi W, Macharia SM, Sang E, Siika AM. Accuracy and Acceptability of Oral Fluid HIV Self-Testing in a General Adult Population in Kenya. *AIDS Behav.* 2016 Apr;20(4):870-9. doi: 10.1007/s10461-015-1213-9. [PubMed](#)

Other References:

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