



Characteristics of First-Time HIV Testers in CDC-Funded Health Department Jurisdictions, 2013



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BACKGROUND

- Over 1.2 million people are living with HIV in the U.S.
- Although the number of persons unaware of their HIV status has decreased, ~14% had not yet been diagnosed in 2011.
- HIV testing and knowledge of status are key first steps to reducing HIV transmission.

Present Study

- Examined characteristics of first-time testers and HIV service delivery among CDC-funded HIV testing events in 2013.

METHODS

- Data are submitted to CDC bi-annually via a secure, online CDC-supported system.
- 61 health department jurisdictions submitted data in 2013.

Measures

- HIV testing events
- HIV positivity
- Linkage to HIV medical care – attendance at 1st medical appointment
- Referral to partner services
- Referral to HIV prevention services

RESULTS

- 18.4% of the 3,213,187 CDC-funded HIV testing events among persons aged 18 years and older were first-time testers.
- Highest percentages of first time testers were among:
 - Heterosexual males (28.3%)
 - Whites (22.3%)
 - Persons aged 18-29 years (21.6%)
 - Hispanics/Latinos (20.9%)
- 14.7% of blacks, 13.3% of MSM, and 15.5% of transgender persons were first-time testers.
- HIV positivity for first-time testers was highest among:
 - MSM (4%)
 - Transgender persons (1.7%)
 - Persons 40-49 years (1%)
 - Blacks (1%)
- 59.1% of HIV-positive first-time testers were linked to HIV medical care, 71% were referred to partner services, and 56.2% were referred to HIV prevention services.

Demographic Characteristics	HIV Testing Events		First Time Testers %	HIV-Positive Persons %	Linkage to HIV Medical Care %	Referral to Partner Services %	Referral to HIV Prevention Services %
	N	Col %					
Age groups							
18-29	1,538,220	47.9%	21.6%	0.4%	58.3%	72.9%	57.4%
30-39	756,782	23.6%	14.1%	0.8%	61.0%	71.0%	57.5%
40-49	461,696	14.4%	15.2%	1.0%	56.8%	71.3%	54.0%
50+	456,489	14.2%	17.7%	0.8%	61.4%	66.3%	54.2%
Gender							
Male	1,580,587	49.2%	19.7%	0.9%	59.2%	71.2%	56.6%
Female	1,610,410	50.1%	17.1%	0.3%	58.8%	70.7%	55.6%
Race/Ethnicity							
White	870,961	27.1%	22.3%	0.3%	58.9%	71.4%	57.1%
Black	1,447,145	45.0%	14.7%	1.0%	54.9%	71.1%	54.0%
Hispanic/Latino	682,296	21.2%	20.9%	0.5%	70.5%	67.0%	56.8%
Target Populations*							
Men who have sex with men (MSM)							
Transgender	10,751	0.3%	15.5%	1.7%	64.3%	60.7%	39.3%
Heterosexual males	553,122	17.2%	28.3%	0.5%	58.4%	80.9%	60.4%
Heterosexual females	796,190	24.8%	20.2%	0.3%	63.1%	82.2%	66.9%
Test setting							
Health care and correctional facilities							
Non-health care	2,203,078	68.6%	16.7%	0.6%	63.5%	70.0%	59.4%
Non-health care	945,306	29.4%	22.4%	0.7%	54.1%	75.0%	53.0%
Total	3,213,187	100%	18.4%	0.6%	59.1%	71.0%	56.2%

*CDC requires target population data for all HIV testing events in non-health care settings and only for HIV-positive persons in health care settings.

DISCUSSION

- CDC recommends routine HIV screening as part of medical services for persons aged 13-64 years.
- 43.6% of first time testers were persons aged 30 years and older. Given CDC's recommendations, there is a delay in testing for the first time among this group.
- HIV positivity was also higher in the older age groups when compared to persons aged 18-29 years.
- It is unknown when these persons may have been infected. However, by the time a person is 30 years and older, s/he could have been exposed to HIV and had an undiagnosed HIV infection for many years, increasing the likelihood to transmit.
- Routine HIV testing is necessary to reduce the time between HIV infection, diagnosis, and initiation of treatment.
- Targeted HIV testing towards populations at risk and screening them annually for HIV also is important.
- Barriers to HIV testing may include low risk perceptions, fear of HIV positivity, stigma, and confidentiality or privacy concerns.
- A better understanding of barriers is needed to design more effective health communication strategies and prevention interventions to increase HIV testing.

