

Attitudes on HIV Testing in the ED: A Comparison between Patients and Staff

Study Objectives

1. To compare staff and patient attitudes about Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) testing in the emergency department (ED).
2. To identify the most appropriate person to deliver the results of a rapid test.

Methods

Self-administered surveys. 34 Staff and 256 “patients” in a large urban emergency department. 19 (55.9%) of staff were registered nurses, the remainder were evenly distributed among physicians, medics, and “other”. “Patients” were 18 to 65 years old inclusive, and in the ED waiting room on days when a Research Assistant was available. 76% were African American; 60% were female. Half of the patients surveyed claimed that their doctor had offered an HIV test in the past while half admitted to asking their doctors to test them for HIV.

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Results

Desire for Testing: Although a large majority of the staff (64.7%) were against testing for HIV in the ED, 88% of patients were in favor of testing. 67.6% of the staff were against only testing high risk patients, while 64.7% were against universal testing. Among patients, 69% of patients would be willing to be tested right away and 87% of them would want results within 30 minutes. Over half of these patients would be willing to pay for tests.

Delivery of Results: Both the patients and staff agreed that a physician should reveal results to the patient, especially a positive result. Most agreed that an RN could deliver results as well, but few of either staff or patients felt that results could be disclosed by a counselor, resident/intern, or social worker. Yet, approximately 50% of all staff felt comfortable revealing either positive or negative results.

Conclusion

Conclusion: 1. ED staff do not want rapid HIV testing in the ED, while patients largely do want it. 2. Both staff and patients agreed that results, both positive and negative, are best delivered by an attending physician.

Patient Questionnaire

Patient Attitudes about Rapid HIV Testing in the ED.

For each statement below, please circle whether you...

- strongly disagree / disagree / have no opinion / agree / or strongly agree (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
1. The Emergency department should offer HIV testing.
 2. If the Emergency department offered HIV testing, I would get tested today.
 3. In order to be HIV tested, I would rather get my gums swabbed rather than my finger poked for a drop of blood.
 4. HIV testing should be free.
 5. I am willing to pay to have an HIV test.
 6. I would like to get my HIV results immediately (30 minutes-1 hour) rather than in 1-2 weeks.
 7. I want to learn ways to avoid getting HIV.
 8. I understand how HIV is transmitted.
 9. I want to learn more about HIV disease.
 10. It doesn't matter who tells me my HIV result.
 11. The ER and hospital can test you for HIV without asking for your consent.
 12. The results of a negative HIV test can be disclosed where beds are separated only by curtains.
 13. I think that ED already tests every patient for HIV without telling them.
 14. If I have been in the hospital, and no one told me I had AIDS or HIV, then I am negative.
 15. The ER and hospital can test you for HIV without asking for your consent.
 16. I would be willing to pay this much to get HIV tested (circle one) Nothing(0)- 5 dollars(5)- 10 dollars(10)- 15 dollars(15)- 20 dollars(20)- other amount _____

6. I would be willing to pay this much to get HIV tested (circle one) Nothing(0)- 5 dollars(5)- 10 dollars(10)- 15 dollars(15)- 20 dollars(20)- other amount _____
12. The person who tells a patient their negative HIV test result is should be a: (circle all that apply) Nurse (1) - doctor (2) - physician-assistant (3) - HIV counselor (4) - social worker (5) It doesn't matter to me (6)
13. The person who should tell a patient their HIV test is positive should be a: (circle all that apply) Nurse (1) - doctor (2) - physician-assistant (3) - HIV counselor (4) - social worker (5) It doesn't matter to me (6)
15. I wouldn't want to get an HIV test in an ER because (mark ALL that apply)
 - HIV is too sensitive a topic (1)
 - I am worried about privacy or confidentiality (2)
 - It takes too long to get the results (3)
 - I don't trust the ER staff (4)
 - I'm afraid other patients will learn my results (5)
 - I already know my HIV status (6)
 - I am not at risk for HIV (7)
 - I am afraid to know the answer. (8)
 - If I found out I was positive, I would "freak out" or kill myself. (9)
21. Have you ever been tested for HIV? Yes (1) / No (2)
22. If yes, what was the result? Positive (1) / Negative (2) / Don't know (3)
23. My last HIV test was (check the right box)
 - Within the last 2 months (1)
 - More than 2 months ago but less than 6 months ago (2)
 - More than 6 months ago but less than 1 year ago (3)
 - More than 1 year ago (4)
24. Are you: Male (1) Female (2) Other(3)(please specify) _____
25. Which of these Race Categories fit you? (You may check more than one if you identify with more than one group.)
 - White(1) Black or African American(2) Asian(3)
 - Hispanic(4)
 - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific(5) Native American/Alaska Native(6)
 - Other (specify) (7) _____
26. Do you have a regular doctor? Yes(1)/No(2)
27. Have you ever asked your doctor to do an HIV test? Yes(2)/ No (2)
28. Has your doctor ever offered you an HIV test? Yes (1)/ No(2)
29. Are you homeless? Yes (1) No(2)
- Have you ever had:
 - 30. Sex with a male..... ? Yes (1)/ No (2) / I don't know(3)
 - 31. Sex with a female..... ? ? ?
 - 32. Sex with injection drug user..... ? ? ?
 - 33. Sex with bisexual male..... ? ? ?
 - 34. Sex with a person with HIV or AIDS..... ? ? ?
 - 35. Sex for drugs/money..... ? ? ?
 - 36. Sex while using drugs..... ? ? ?
 - Have you ever:
 - 37. Injected nonprescription drugs..... ? ? ?

Adapted with permission from the original questionnaire Doug White, MD created for Alleghenia County Medical Center. Version 12/07 rev 2008