

Comparisons of HIV Testing History among Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM) in New York City



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Background

HIV testing is an important strategy for populations at risk for HIV. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently announced recommendations expanding the role of health-care providers in HIV testing. The revised guidelines aim to augment HIV screening, thereby increasing the rate of earlier diagnosis. Of those infected in the U.S., approximately one-quarter are unaware of their disease status. People who are unaware of their infection disproportionately account for new transmissions and are unable to benefit from treatment. [Lyons MS, Lindsey CJ, Fichtenbaum CJ, Camargo CA Jr. Interpreting and implementing the 2006 CDC recommendations for HIV testing in health-care settings. Public Health Rep. 2007; 122(5):579-83]

Our objective was to compare the HIV testing history among men who have sex with men (MSM) from behavioral surveys conducted in 2004 – 2007 in New York City.

Methodology

The data source of this analysis came from four cross-sectional anonymous surveys: National HIV Behavioral Surveillance (NHBS), House Ball Survey (HBS) and two cycles of Web-based HIV Behavioral Surveillance (WHBS).

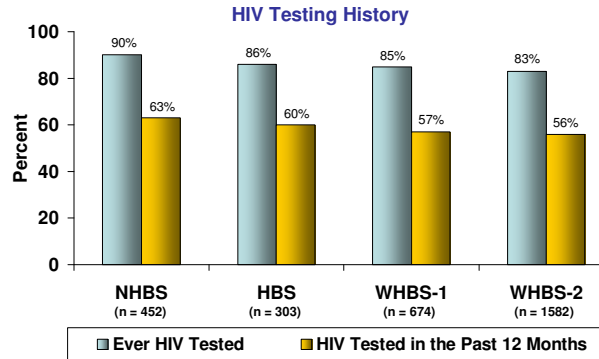
	NHBS	HBS	WHBS-1	WHBS-2
Study Year	2004	2004	2006	2007
Target population	MSM	House Ball Community*	MSM using Internet	MSM using Internet
Sampling Method	Venue-based	Venue-based	Web-based	Web-based
Study Sample Size	504	503	916	2046

* The House Ball community is a well established group of individuals attending and participating in dance and fashion competitions known as "balls." The community is composed of social networks of "houses," which are often named after famous clothing designers or celebrities that compete with each other for trophies and prize money at balls. The community provides a social framework for young, predominantly Black and Latino/a, gay and transgender persons.

Inclusion criteria for this analysis: Only sexually active MSM who self-reported negative or unknown HIV status were included.

Demographics

	NHBS (n = 452)	HBS (n = 303)	WHBS-1 (n = 674)	WHBS-2 (n = 1582)
Age (Median, Yr)	28	21	32	26
Race/Ethnicity				
White	40	3	78	64
Black	23	51	5	12
Latino	28	44	12	18
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	1	3	3
Other	4	1	2	3
Country of Birth				
US-Born	78	93	87	84
Foreign-Born	22	7	12	13
Education				
High School Graduate or Higher	92	77	99	98
Income				
< \$10,000	22	46	7	n/a
\$10,000 - \$29,999	26	29	12	n/a
≥ \$30,000	50	21	78	n/a
Sexual Identity				
Homosexual	78	73	87	84
Bisexual	19	21	10	13
Heterosexual	1	2	1	1



Location of Last HIV Test in Past 12 Months

	NHBS (n = 283)	HBS (n = 181)	WHBS-1 (n = 384)	WHBS-2 (n = 880)
	%	%	%	%
Private Doctors Office/HMO	38	23	55	51
Hospital (inpatient)	2	6	1	2
Emergency Room	<1	0	1	1
Adult HIV/AIDS Specialty Clinic	<1	3	2	1
Sexually Transmitted Disease	<1	5	2	1
Community Health Center/Public Health Clinic	26	35	20	22
Family Planning Clinic	0	1	1	1
Prenatal/Obstetrics Clinic	0	0	0	1
Other Outpatient Facility	9	1	1	<1
HIV/AIDS Street Outreach/Mobile Unit	2	5	2	2
HIV Counseling and Testing Site	7	10	10	9
Needle Exchange Program	<1	0	0	0
Drug Treatment Program	1	1	0	0
Correctional Facility	1	2	0	1
Blood Bank/Plasma Center	0	1	1	1
Military	<1	0	<1	1
At Home	1	1	3	3
Other	6	7	2	0

Legend: Medical (Yellow), Community-based (Light Blue), Other (Light Purple)

Type of Last HIV Test in Past 12 Months

	NHBS (n = 283)	HBS (n = 181)	WHBS-1 (n = 384)	WHBS-2 (n = 880)
	%	%	%	%
Rapid Test (Blood)	18	10	n/a	n/a
Rapid Test (Oral)	10	17	n/a	n/a
Traditional Blood Test	70	72	n/a	n/a

Top 5 Reasons for Not Testing in Past 12 Months

NHBS (n = 169)	%	HBS (n = 122)	%
Afraid of finding out HIV positive	44	Have not done anything to get HIV	43
Have not done anything to get HIV	38	Afraid of finding out HIV positive	39
Did not have time to get tested	28	Did not have time to get tested	27
Worried someone would find out the results	20	Worried someone would find out the results	23
Worried name would be reported to the government	19	Worried name would be reported to the government	18

WHBS-1 (n = 290)	%	WHBS-2 (n = 702)	%
Have not done anything to get HIV	27	Have not done anything to get HIV	27
Afraid of finding out HIV positive	19	Afraid of finding out HIV positive	20
Did not have time to get tested	15	Do not know where to go get an HIV test	15
Worried someone would find out the results	15	Did not have time to get tested	14
Worried name would be reported to the government	14	No money or insurance to pay for test	13

Conclusions

- While most MSM reported having ever tested for HIV, many were not tested in the last year.
- The majority of MSM reported testing in medical settings.
- Across the surveys, the most frequently reported reasons for not testing in the past 12 months were perception of not being at risk for HIV, fear of positive HIV diagnosis and lack of time.
- These findings underscore the importance of CDC recommendations that medical providers routinely offer HIV testing to all patients regardless of reported risk status, and offer testing to MSM at least annually.

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