



# Acceptability and implications of rapid HCV testing among high risk young injection drug users

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# Background

- Estimated 50% to 75% of the those infected with hepatitis C virus (HCV) have not been tested in the U.S.
- People who inject drugs (PWID) are at highest risk of infection in the U.S., with limited access to HCV testing
- Newly available, FDA approved, and accurate rapid point-of-care anti-HCV testing, coupled with post-test counseling in community-based settings can help accelerate the identification of HCV infections

# Methods

- The UFO Study enrolls young young adult (<30 years) active (injected in past 30 days) into prospective follow up.
- Baseline research visit included the choice between two anti-HCV tests: Rapid (fingerstick) or EIA (venipuncture)
- Short questionnaire assessing participant's perception of its accuracy, preferred testing procedures, and reasons for said preferences.
- Blood samples were collected to ascertain HCV viremia status
- All participants received pre- and post-test risk reduction counseling



# Results

- 75% chose the RAPID test
- There were no differences in characteristics or anti-HCV status between *rapid* and *standard* test-takers

## *Perceptions of HCV Rapid test vs. Standard HCV test:*

- 62% *believe* the HCV rapid Test is *as or more* accurate
- Of those, most (39%), because both procedures require blood
- Of those who *believe* HCV rapid Test to be less accurate, most (56%), because the test is 'too fast', or 'too new'

## *... and*

- 95% of participants would recommend the rapid test to a friend
- 78% of those who chose HCV rapid test prefer it over HCV Standard

# Acceptability of anti-HCV *rapid* test

Variable	%
<b>Main reason for choosing rapid test:</b>	
Wanted fast results	63.2
Rapid test is more convenient	10.5
Rapid test requires less blood	10.5
Rapid test is less stressful	5.3
Other reasons	10.4
<b>Compared to Standard blood draw, getting a fingerstick was:</b>	
Much less painful	36.4
Less painful	31.8
About the same amount of pain	25.0
More painful	6.9
<b>“I found the fingerstick uncomfortable”</b>	
Disagree	40.9
Strongly disagree	29.6
Agree	25.0
Strongly disagree	4.6

# Summary

- **Lessons Learned:**
  - Most young IDU opted for HCV rapid test and majority would recommend the procedure to a friend.
  - Knowing one's HCV status matters: of those who chose the HCV rapid test, many stated they wanted fast results in lieu of waiting for commercial lab results to return
  - Fingersticks for blood collection as a favorable alternative to venipuncture: most participants found the fingerstick less painful and less invasive
- **Implications:**
  - Increased awareness of one's HCV status will help prevent the spread of HCV
  - Anti-HCV rapid tests can be implemented in high volume, with timely turn-around, at relatively low cost
  - More research is needed to maximize implementation of the HCV rapid test; minimize barriers to use; and combine with HCV RNA testing when needed for high risk groups.

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