

# PROVISION OF HIV TEST RESULTS BY TELEPHONE

## Evidence-Informed Structural Intervention

### INTERVENTION DESCRIPTION

#### Goal of Intervention

- Increase HIV testing
- Improve receipt of HIV test results

#### Target Population

- Men who have sex with men (MSM) attending a public health clinic

#### Brief Description

*Provision of HIV Test Results by Telephone* incorporates a policy change regarding communication of HIV test results at a public sexual health clinic in Victoria, Australia. The policy change was made on January 1, 2013, and permits men to obtain their HIV test result via telephone. Clinic patients are asked to call the clinic 7 days after their HIV test, and are asked to confirm their identity prior to receiving their test results. Prior to the policy change, men were required to re-attend the clinic at least 7 days after a HIV test to receive test results via face-to-face consultation. Clinic staff receive training on the new policy change and procedures to ensure safe and effective telephone consultations. The policy change is restricted to clients with HIV-negative test results. HIV-positive test results are provided at face-to-face consultations after patients are called by clinic staff and asked to return for their results.

#### Theoretical Basis

None reported

#### Intervention Duration

- Ongoing

#### Deliverer

- Clinic staff

#### Structural Components

- Access
  - Increased access to HIV testing and HIV test results
- Capacity building—Provider/supervisor training
  - Trained clinic staff provide HIV test results via phone to ensure safe and effective telephone consultations
- Policy/Procedure —Institutional policy/procedure
  - Implemented policy to provide HIV test results by telephone

#### Intervention Setting

- Public sexual health clinic

#### Delivery Methods

- Policy implementation
- Provider training

## INTERVENTION PACKAGE INFORMATION

**An intervention package is not available at this time.** Please contact **Melanie Bissessor**, Melbourne Sexual Health Centre, Alfred Hospital, 580 Swanston Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia.

**Email:** [mbissessor@mshc.org.au](mailto:mbissessor@mshc.org.au) for details on intervention materials.

## EVALUATION STUDY AND RESULTS

### Study Location Information

The original evaluation was conducted in Victoria, Australia between 2011 and 2014.

### Key Intervention Effects

- Increased HIV testing
- Increased receipt of HIV test results

### Recruitment Settings

Public sexual health clinic

### Eligibility Criteria

Men were eligible if they had male partners in the last 12 months, attended the clinic for the first time between January 1, 2011 and December 31, 2013, and were not repeat clinic attenders.

### Study Sample

Participants in the pre- and post-policy cohorts (pre-policy cohort: n = 2228; post-policy cohort: n = 3,942) had the following characteristics:

- *100% male*
- *Median age 31 years*

### Comparison

This study uses a serial cross-sectional clinic design. The comparison included participants in the pre-policy cohort (i.e., individuals who attended the clinic in the 24 months before implementation of the policy change to obtain HIV test results by telephone).

### Relevant Outcomes Measured

- HIV testing was measured as:
  - the number of HIV tests conducted during 24 months before and 24 months after the new policy was introduced
  - the number of HIV test results received within 30 days during 24 months before and 24 months after the new policy was introduced
  - the time (i.e., number of days) to obtain HIV test results by phone or clinic visit within 30 days
- HIV incidence was measured as the number of men diagnosed with HIV during 24 months before and 24 months after the new policy was introduced.

### **Participant Retention**

Because participant retention is not a criterion for evaluating structural intervention studies, PRS does not evaluate this information.

### **Significant Findings on Relevant Outcomes**

- There was a significantly greater proportion of participants who had a HIV test in the post-policy period compared to the pre-policy period (89.1% vs 85.9%, percent difference= 3.2%; 95% CI = 1.7—4.7,  $p < 0.001$ ).
- There was a significant reduction in the time to obtain HIV test results by phone or clinic visit in the post-policy period compared to the pre-policy period (post-policy period mean (SD): 8.24 days (4.15); pre-policy period mean (SD): 8.76 days (4.54);  $p < 0.001$ ).

### **Strengths**

None identified

### **Considerations**

- There were no significant intervention effects on HIV incidence ( $p=0.807$ ).
- There was no significant difference in the proportion of participants who received HIV test results by either telephone or at a clinic visit in the post-policy period compared to the pre-policy period ( 78.1% vs 76.1%, percent difference= 2.00%; 95% CI = -0.07—4.00,  $p=0.058$ ).
- There was a significantly greater proportion of participants who received HIV test results by telephone in the post-policy period compared to the pre-policy period (45.0% vs 1.7%, percent difference= 43.3%; 95% CI = 41.3—45.3,  $p < 0.001$ ). Additionally, there was a significantly lower proportion of participants who received HIV test results at a clinic visit in the post-policy period compared to the pre-policy period (33.1% vs 74.4%, percent difference= 41.3%; 95% CI = 38.7—43.3,  $p < 0.001$ ).

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## REFERENCES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Bissessor, M., Bradshaw, C. S., Fairley, C. K., Chen, M. Y., & Chow, E.P. (2015). [Provision of HIV test results by telephone is both safe and efficient for men who have sex with men](#). *International Journal of STD & AIDS*, 28, 39-44.

**Researcher:** **Melanie Bissessor**

Melbourne Sexual Health Centre  
Alfred Hospital  
580 Swanston Street  
Carlton, Victoria 3053  
Australia

**Email:** [mbissessor@mshc.org.au](mailto:mbissessor@mshc.org.au)

