

# Repeat Participation in a Free Home HIV Self-testing Service and Sexual Health: Home Test Giveaway (HTG), New York City

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## Background

- HIV self-testing (HIVST) may increase HIV status awareness
- In 2015, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC DOHMH) implemented the HTG among men and transgender people who have sex with men (MTSM)
  - HIVST kits sent at no cost, through the mail
  - Entirely online – recruitment, eligibility assessment, kit order, follow-up survey
  - Two waves annually
- We report demographics and sexual health characteristics of participants with repeat enrollment in consecutive HTG waves

## Methods

### Home HIVST Model

- Participants recruited on dating applications and websites
- Eligibility determined via brief questionnaire: MTSM, age ≥18, NYC resident, no prior HIV diagnosis
- Eligible participants emailed discount codes to redeem a free home HIVST on the manufacturer's website
- ~2 months after HIVST distribution, participants recruited for follow-up survey (incentive: \$25 gift card)

### Repeat participant data analysis

- Restricted to HTG waves conducted in Spring 2017 (May - July, 2017) and Winter 2017/18 (December 2017-March 2018)
- Repeat participation determined by email matching across waves
- Descriptive statistics performed on survey data from Winter 2017/18
- Sexual health characteristics analysis limited to participants who reported HTG HIVST use
- Matched-pair analysis performed on participants' responses to questions on sexual health (condomless sex in the past month, STI testing in the past 6 months, HTG effect on HIV testing schedule) to evaluate within-participant changes from Spring 2017 to Winter 2017/18 (McNemar's)

Figure 1. Example of Home Test Giveaway recruitment advertisement, NYC 2017-2018



## Results

### Characteristics of repeat participants as reported in Winter 2017/18 (Table 1)

- 25% of Winter 2017/18 participants previously participated in Spring 2017
- 78% were <35 years; 34% identified as Hispanic and 30% as White; 98% identified as a man; 89% identified as gay; 33% reported income <\$20,000
- 41% were uninsured, 45% had not seen a healthcare provider in the past 6 months, and 21% reported PrEP use in the past 6 months
- 21% reported willingness to pay retail price for a HIVST

Table 1. Characteristics of repeat participants of Home Test Giveaway (HTG) as reported in Winter 2017/18, NYC

Characteristic	n/N	%
Winter 2017/18 participants who also participated in Spring 2017	440/1728	25%
Age (years)		
18-34	343/440	78%
≥35	97/440	22%
Race		
Black	85/440	19%
Hispanic	150/440	34%
Asian	49/440	11%
White	133/440	30%
Other	23/440	5%
Gender		
Man	431/440	98%
Woman	1/440	<1%
Transgender	5/440	1%
Gender non-conforming	3/440	1%
Sexual identity		
Gay	370/415	89%
Bisexual	41/415	10%
Other	4/415	1%
Income		
< \$20,000	127/380	33%
≥ \$20,000	253/380	67%
Health insurance		
Insured	244/414	59%
Uninsured	170/414	41%
Healthcare visit in the past 6 months		
Yes	234/425	55%
No	191/425	45%
PrEP use in the past 6 months		
Yes	89/433	21%
No	344/433	79%
Would pay retail price for an HIVST (~\$40)		
Yes	73/353	21%
No	280/353	79%
How was HIVST used		
Self	356/422	84%
Gave away	29/422	7%
Not used	37/422	9%

### Sexual health characteristics of repeat participants who reported using the HTG HIVST in Winter 2017/18 (Table 2)

- 17% reported condomless sex in the past month
  - 65% reported not having STI testing in the past 6 months
  - 72% reported testing for HIV sooner because of the HIVST
- Within-subject matched-pair responses (Table 3)**
- 14 of 31 (45%) participants who reported past-month condomless sex in Spring 2017 did not report this risk factor in Winter 2017/18
  - There were no significant changes in response for 6-month STI testing or HIV testing frequency

Table 2. Sexual health characteristics of repeat participants of Home Test Giveaway (HTG) who reported using the HIVST in Winter 2017/18, NYC

Characteristic	n/N	%
Condomless sex in past month		
Yes	59/340	17%
No	281/340	83%
STI testing in the past 6 months		
Yes	122/346	35%
No	244/346	65%
HTG effect on HIV testing schedule		
Tested for HIV sooner	184/257	72%
No change in HIV testing	62/257	24%
Tested for HIV later	11/257	4%

Table 3. Within-subject matched-pair analysis of sexual health survey responses, Spring 2017 and Winter 2017/18

Characteristic		Winter 2017/18		
		Yes	No	Total
Condomless sex in the past month	Spring 2017	17	14/31 (45%)	31
		31 (12%)	225	256
		Winter 2017/18		
		Yes	No	Total
STI testing in the past 6 months	Spring 2017	58	33/91 (36%)	91
		31/199 (16%)	168	199
		Winter 2017/18		
		Same/sooner	Later	Total
HTG effect on HIV testing schedule	Spring 2017	105	3/108 (3%)	108
		4/5 (80%)	1	5

## Limitations

- Data are based on self-report and subject to social desirability bias and recall error
- Follow-up survey was voluntary and respondents may not be representative of all repeat participants who received an HIVST
- Repeat participation criteria was limited to two HTG waves and did account for participation in all prior HTG waves
- Results of this giveaway may not be generalizable to other settings or populations

## Discussion

- Home HIVST acceptability was high, with one quarter of participants participating in consecutive HTG waves
- Free home HIVST may benefit those of low income, limited healthcare resources, or unwilling to pay for an HIVST
- 6-month STI testing among repeat participants was low, but the majority reported testing for HIV sooner because of the HTG
- Nearly half of repeat participants who reported past-month condomless sex changed their response in the following wave
- Next steps include identifying and characterizing repeat participants across all 6 waves of the HTG to understand how to better serve MTSM in NYC who are utilizing the HTG and to improve promotion of sexual health resources and strategies

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