

# Feasibility and Reach of a HIV Self-Test (HIVST) Giveaway, New York City, 2015-16

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## Background

- HIV self-test (HIVST) may increase HIV status awareness<sup>1,2</sup>
  - Advantages include convenience and privacy
  - Barriers include cost and limited access
- New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC DOHMH) Health Department piloted an HIVST Giveaway (HTG) among men and transgender people who have sex with men (MTSM)
  - Tests sent at no cost, through the mail
  - Entirely online – recruitment, eligibility assessment, kit order
- We examined feasibility, reach, experience and results of our HTG model

## Methods

### HIVST Giveaway Model (Figure 1)

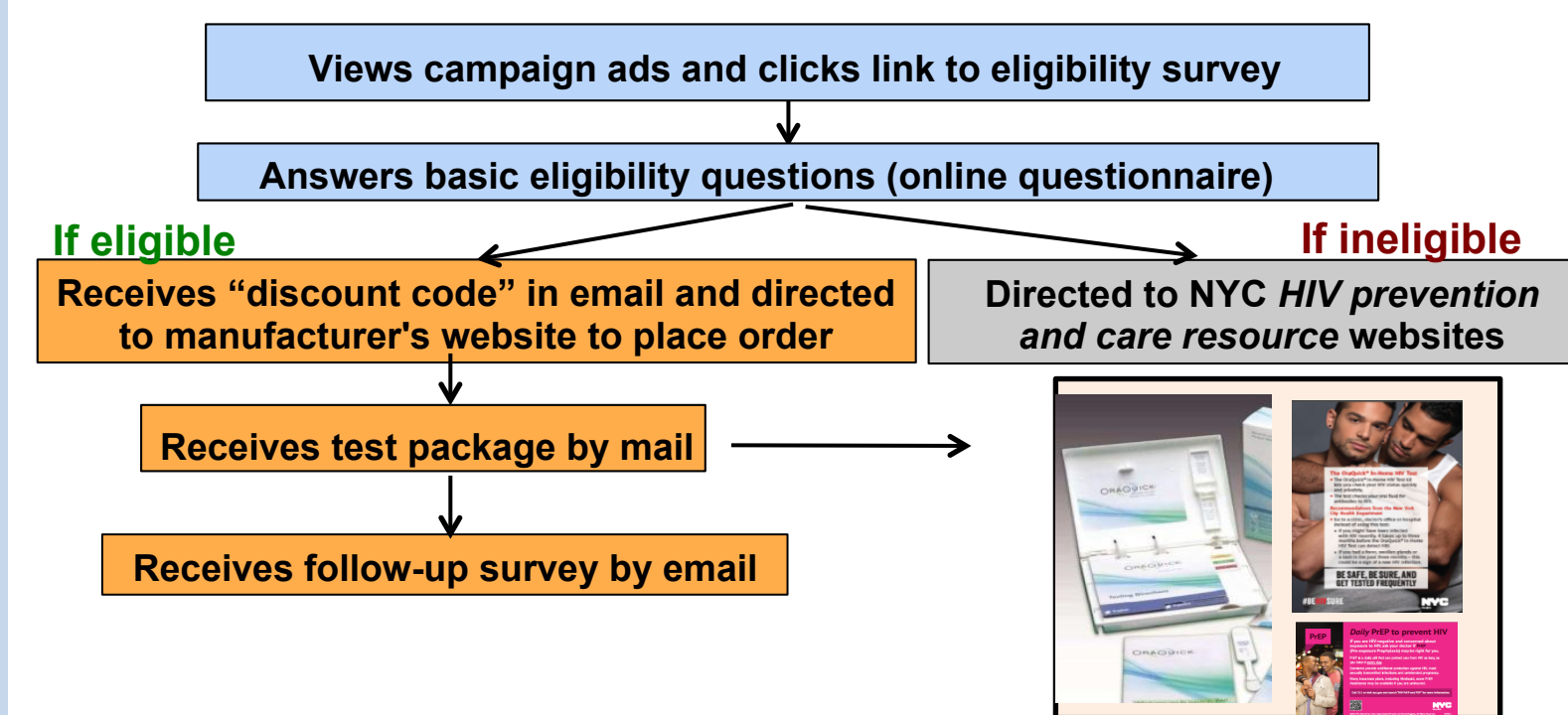
- Participants recruited on dating applications and websites
- Eligibility determined via brief questionnaire
- Eligible participants emailed 1 of 2500 available discount codes to redeem on the manufacturer's website
- Once redeemed, participant was sent package with HIVST and NYC DOHMH-created inserts on testing and on PrEP/PEP
- ~2 months after HIVST distribution ended, participants recruited via email for follow-up survey (incentive: \$25 gift card)

**Eligibility** Adult MTSM, NYC residents, not previously HIV-diagnosed

**Data measures** Age, race/ethnicity, time since last HIV test; test receipt, use, experience, result and, if reactive, confirmatory testing, care and prescription

**Data analysis** (1) Calculated proportions; (2) Compared responses on eligibility questionnaire among follow-up survey respondents vs. non-respondents using chi-square test, to examine representativeness of follow-up survey respondents

Figure 1. Participant Experience of HIVST Giveaway, New York City, 2015-16



## Results

### Feasibility (Figure 2)

- Recruitment concluded in **23 days** with 2497 codes distributed
- Among those screened, 74% were eligible
- Among eligible participants, 71% redeemed codes
- Response to the follow-up survey was 48%; among respondents, 92% had received the test; among test recipients, 80% used the HIVST received

### Reach (Table 1)

- Majority of HIVST users were <35 years-old, 41% were of Black and/or Hispanic, and 18% had income <\$20,000/year
- Most HIVST users reported recent risk of HIV exposure
- Almost half had either never tested or not tested in the past year

### HIVST Giveaway Experience (Table 2)

- Most HIVST users reported testing sooner than usual or for the first time
- Almost all HIVST users reported being likely to recommend HTG to a friend

### Test Results (Table 3)

- Among HIVST users, 7 reported a reactive result, of whom 5 reported no previous diagnosis; 80% of the latter reported receiving a confirmatory test

### Representativeness of Follow-up Survey (data not shown)

- No differences in age, race/ethnicity, HIV testing history or area of residence were detected comparing all those who redeemed codes to those who reported receiving HIVST on the follow-up survey (p<0.05)

Figure 2. Pilot Flow for HIVST Giveaway, New York City, 2015-16

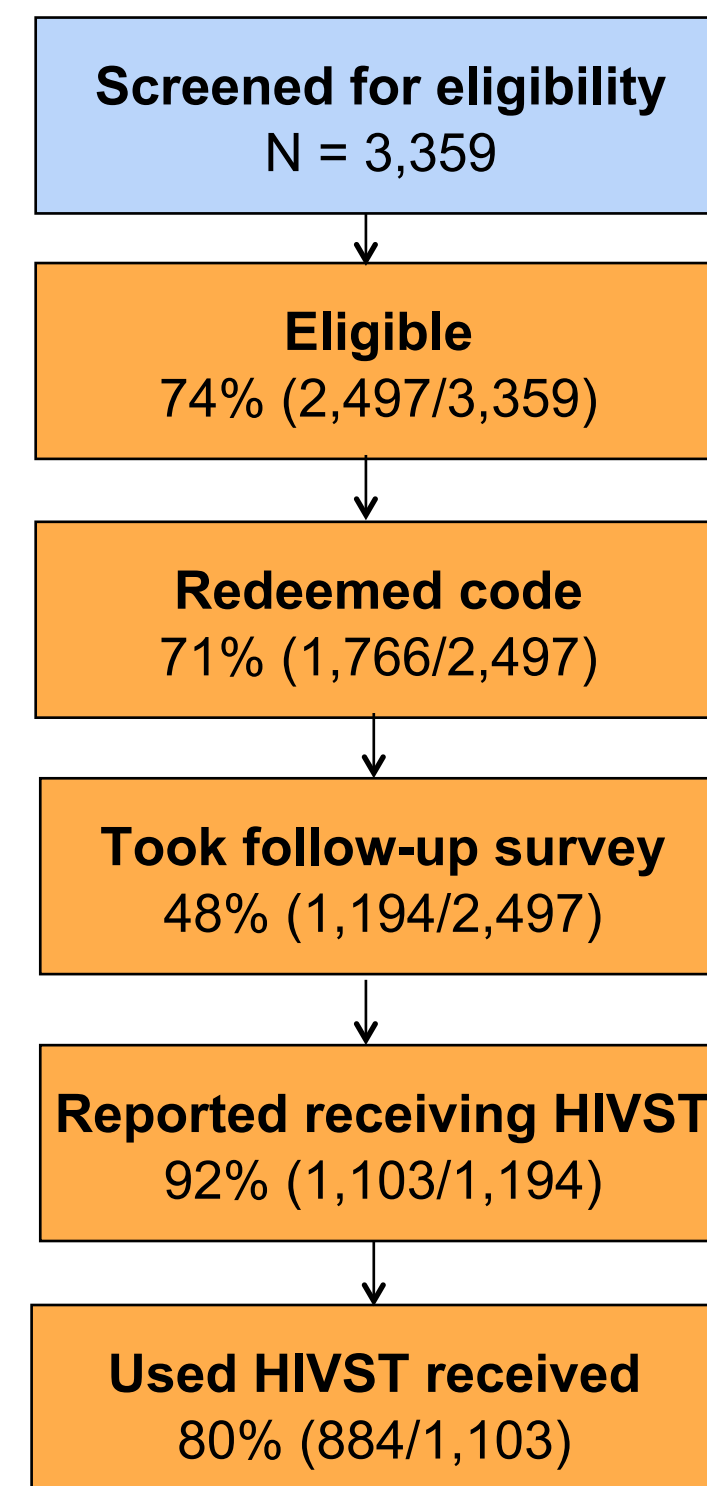


Table 1. Characteristics among HIVST Users, HIVST Giveaway, New York City, 2015-16

Characteristic	n/N	%
% < 35 years old	635/884	72%
% Black, non-Hispanic	93/862	11%
% Hispanic	259/862	30%
% income <\$20,000/year	144/785	18%
% with risk of HIV exposure <sup>1</sup> (past 6 months)	761/883	86%
% with 2 or more condomless anal sex partners in past 6 months	284/819	35%
% never tested for HIV prior to Giveaway	118/858	14%
% last test more than 1 year prior to Giveaway	244/858	28%

<sup>1</sup>Report of any of the following in past 6 months: any condomless anal sex, post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) use, sexually transmitted infection (STI) diagnosis, sex with an HIV-infected partner, stimulant (powder or crack cocaine, methamphetamine, MDMA) or injection drug use

Table 2. Testing Experience Among HIVST Users, HIVST Giveaway, New York City, 2015-16

Characteristic	n/N	%
% used HIVST within 1 week of receiving	617/864	71%
% reporting testing sooner or for the first time	591/836	71%
% reporting being likely to recommend HTG to a friend	863/883	98%

Table 3. Test Results Among HIVST Users, HIVST Giveaway, New York City, 2015-16

Characteristic	n/N	%
% with reactive results	7/868	0.8%
% with reactive results and reported no previous HIV-positive results	5/868	0.6%
% with confirmatory test	4/5	80%
% had HIV care appointment	4/4	100%
% starting taking antiretroviral medications	3/4	75%

## Limitations

- Data are based on self-report and thus subject to social desirability bias, other misrepresentation, or recall error
- Follow-up survey respondents may not be representative of all participants who received an HIVST
- Results of this giveaway may not be generalizable to other settings or populations

## Discussion

- We rapidly distributed a large volume of HIVST to NYC MTSM, demonstrating the feasibility of the model
- Reach included a diverse set of NYC MTSM, many of whom had never tested or not tested recently
- Despite reaching those at higher risk of HIV exposure, reported seropositivity was relatively low. Most of those with reactive results were linked to care.
- We received positive feedback on the experience, suggesting that this is one acceptable way to reach MTSM for HIV testing
- Findings will inform future HTG adaptations, including partnership with community-based organizations to recruit those at risk of HIV exposure who may not be reached online

## References

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