

**Dried bloodspot based  
HIV testing 'HIVcheck.jp'  
is a new testing opportunity for  
men who have sex with men  
in Tokyo, Japan**

***Kota IWAHASHI***

**LONDON**

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*Kota IWAHASHI, Noriyo KANEKO, Misao TAKANO*

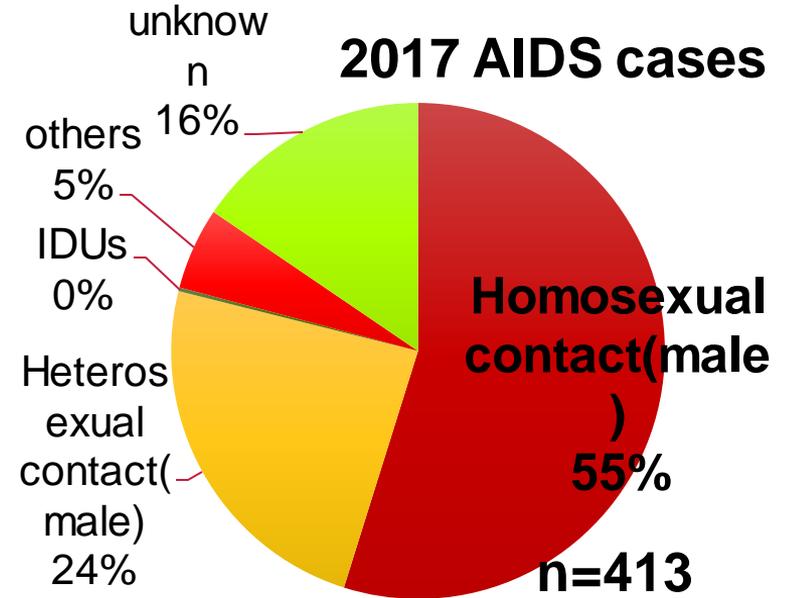
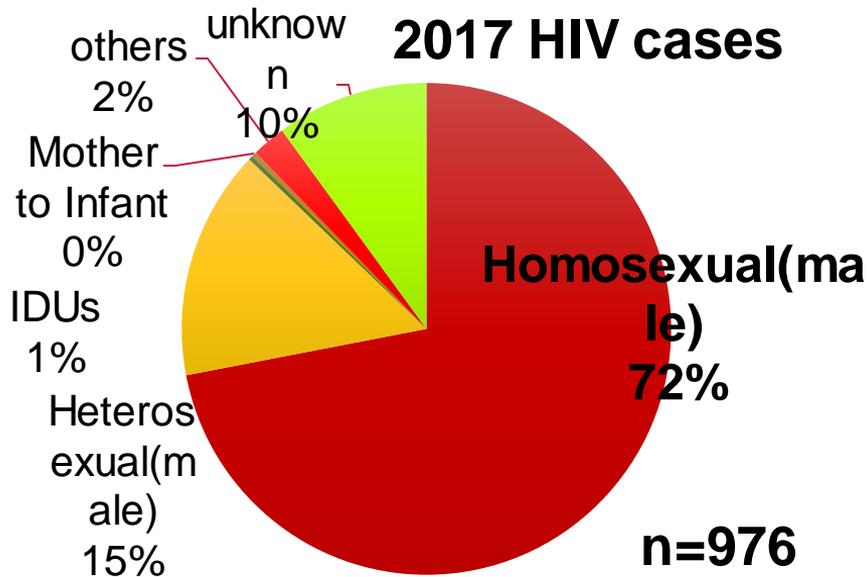
*Shinichi OKA, Takayuki Homma, Masao Tateyama, Seiichi ICHIKAWA,  
Jun ARAKI, Takuya KINAMI, Yuzuru IKUSHIMA, Ikuo SATO, Toshiya FUKUHARA  
Tsunefusa HAYASHIDA, Yasuyo NAKAYAMA, Hiroo OBINATA, Akifumi IMAMURA*

**Japan Health and Labor Sciences Research Grants**

*Research on the provision of effective HIV testing program for MSM and development of intervention for high risk groups : Expansion of HIV testing opportunities by disseminating HIV self-testing kits and bio-behavior surveys*

# Mode of HIV AIDS transmission in Japan 2017

**MSM** is the most affected population

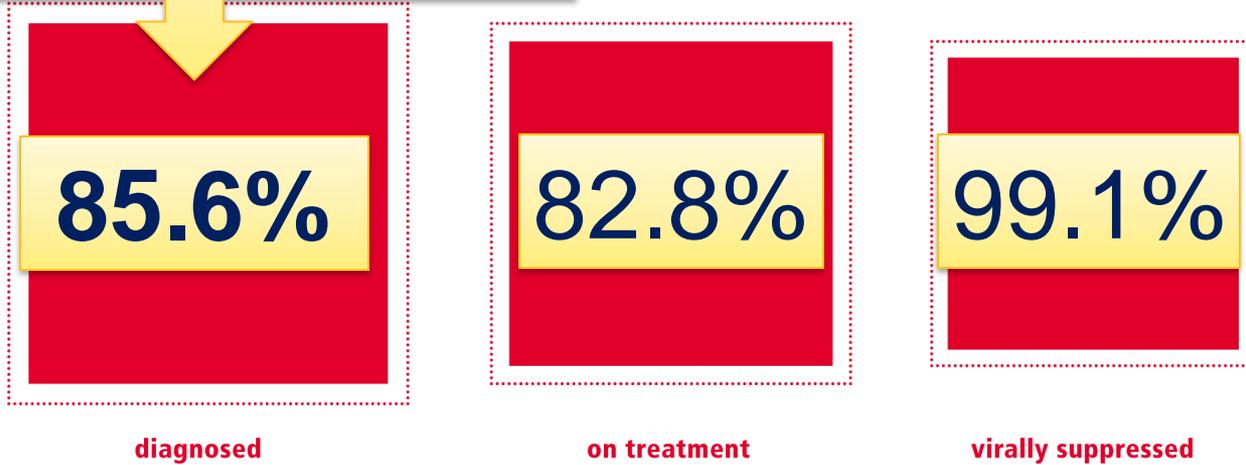


2017 Annual Report National Surveillance Committee, JAPAN MOHLW

# UNAIDS 90-90-90 treatment target

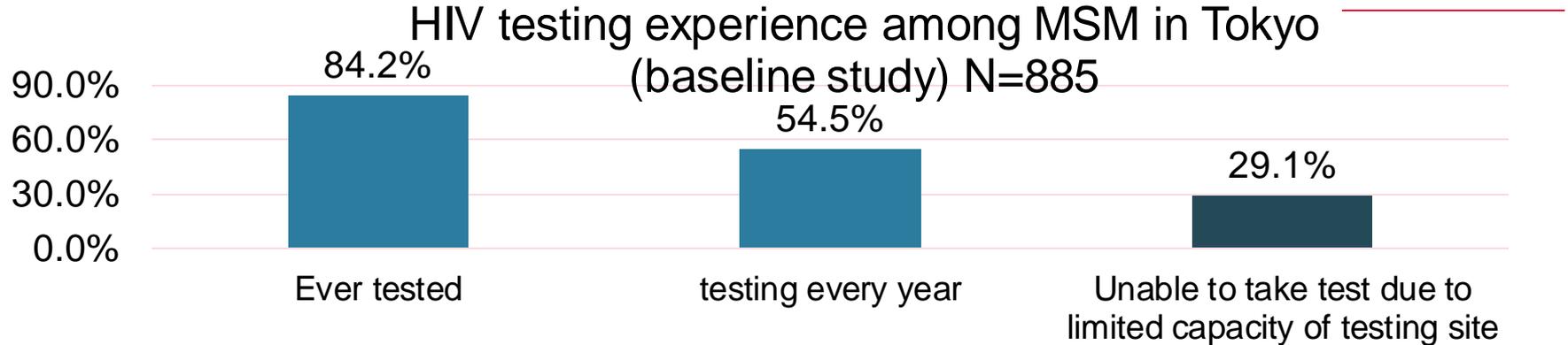
## Estimation of the Japanese situation(2017)

The estimated number of  
Undiagnosed cases : **3,840**



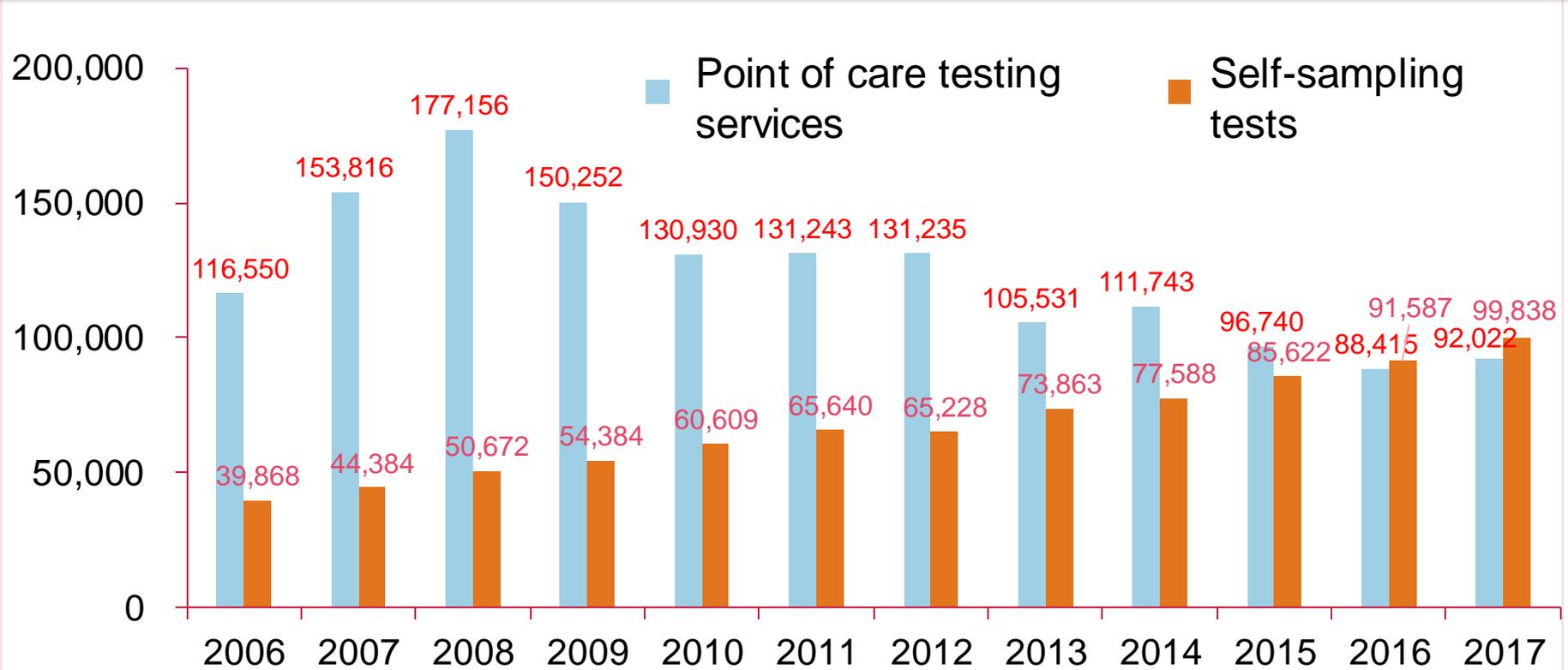
Testing promotion toward MSM  
including Regular testing is crucial in Japan

# Limited HIV Testing options in Japan



- Only standard point of care testing in a hospital or public health center is admitted as an HIV testing option in Japan
- Limitations of point of care testing for MSM
  - Restrictions on place and timing (ex. daytime only, not available in community venues)
  - Insufficient capacity to provide required number of HIV tests for MSM in Tokyo
  - Cannot reach hidden MSM

Now in JAPAN, the number of tests at point of care faces stagnation,  
**BUT** the number of self-sampling tests is rising  
although it is **NOT** officially approved.



# Dry-bloodspots-based, self-collection HIV testing kit project as new testing option for MSM living in TOKYO



## What is HIVcheck.jp?

1. MSM directly collects the dried blood spots (DBS) self-collection HIV test kit from the community center akta in Shinjuku 2-chome
2. The participants collect their own blood by finger-prick and anonymously post the kit to the laboratory

# Dry-bloodspots-based, self-collection HIV testing kit project as new testing option for MSM living in TOKYO

3. DBS is soaked in phosphate-buffered saline overnight and the eluted sample is examined using the fourth-generation HIV Ag/Ab test of LUMIPULSE and followed when the first assay was positive
  - For more details on the methodology of HIV testing, see: M Takano, K Iwahashi et al., BMC Infect Dis. 2018; 18: 627.
4. The result is defined as provisionally positive if both were positive
5. The participants access the study website and check the results of their tests using a unique ID and password

# Study design

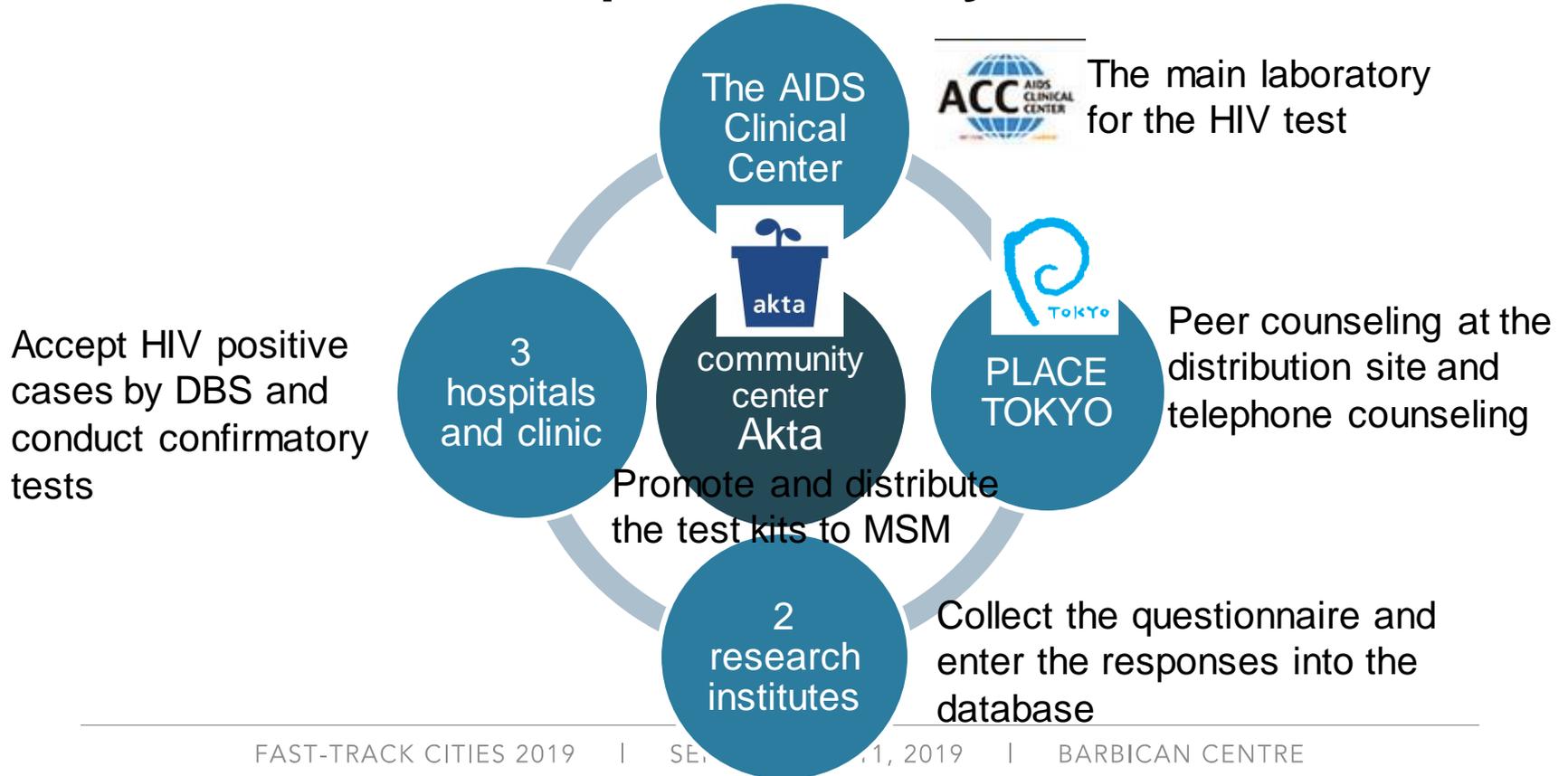
The “HIVcheck.jp” kit has been distributed since February 2018 and will end in December 2019.

The eligibility criteria are:

1. Men who have sex with men
2. Aged  $\geq 20$  years

The target number of kits to be distributed was 1,500 kits/year. This program is provided free of charge and anonymously.

# The participating institutions in this cooperative study include :



# HIVcheck.jp Recruitment of participants

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- Advertisements posted on mobile dating applications for MSM.
  - A click on the banner leads to “HIVcheck.jp”.
- Advertisements were distributed to gay bars, gay shops, gay saunas and gay magazines.

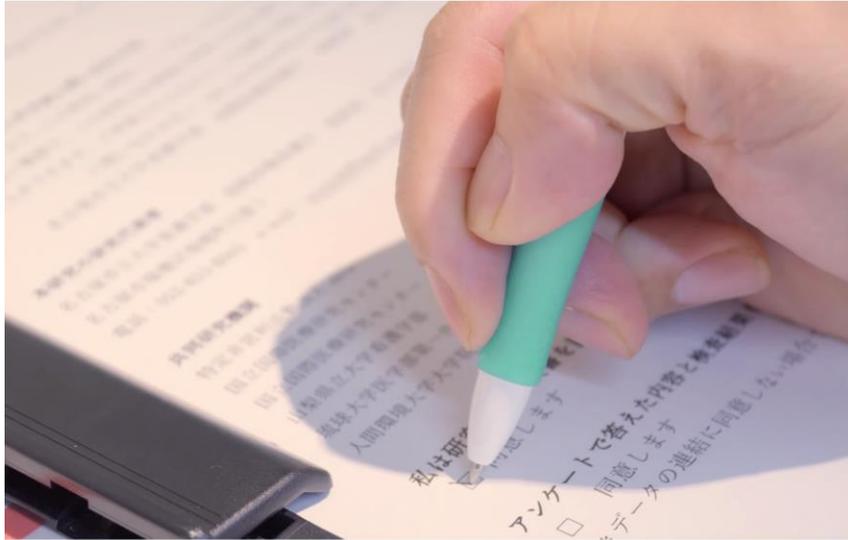
## Distribution of “HIV check” kit

HIV test kit distribution was conducted every Monday night from 7 to 10 PM at the community center.

- Eligible men were enrolled in the study after they read the informed consent form and checked the agree box about the condition of anonymity.
- Staff members explained how to use the self-collection kit and handed it directly to the participant.

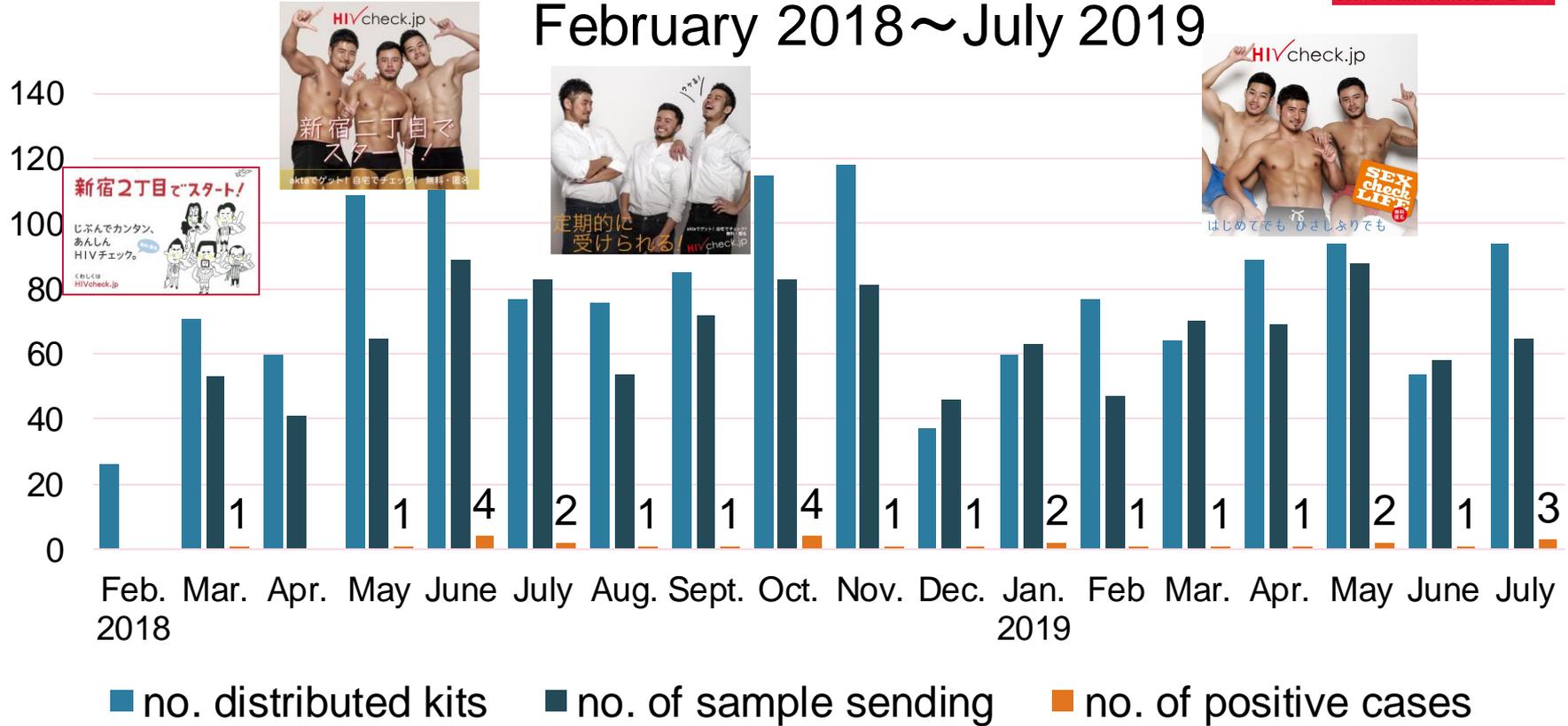


# Bio-behavior survey

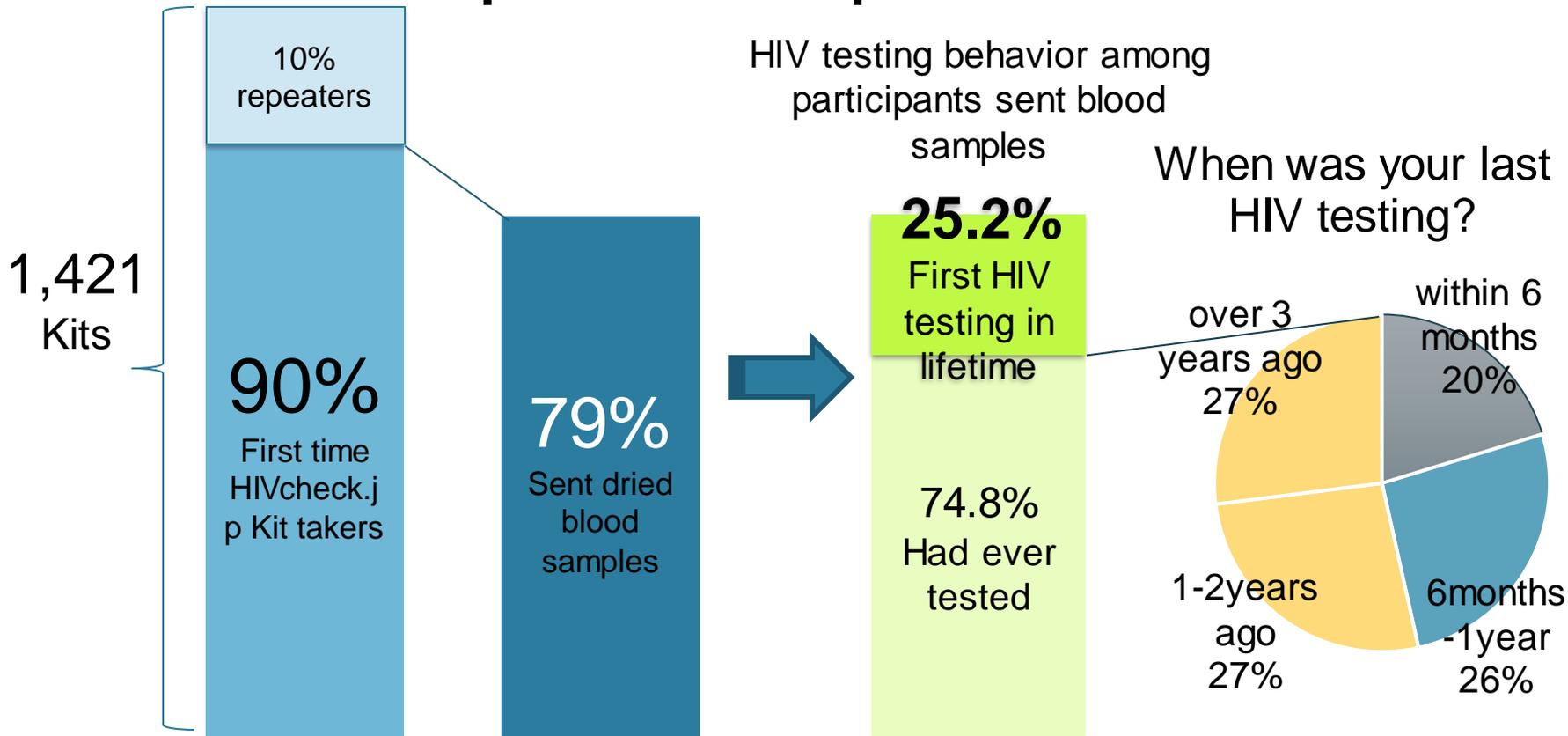


- After obtaining informed consent, a self-administered behavior survey was distributed.
- Testing results and behavior surveys are linked by a unique ID for each tester (only participants who gave obtained informed consent.)

## February 2018 ~ July 2019



# No. of distributed kits and sample sending rate, profile of sample senders



## HIVcheck.jp 2018 Feb-2019 July

- 99% of people checking their test results on the web
- Positive cases and rate: 27 positive cases, 2.4%  
\*screening tests
- Confirmation rate of linkage to care among screening positive cases: 12 cases (44.4%)
- 98% of testing kit receivers agreed to link the serological results to their behavior survey

- From February 2018 to July 2019, 1127 DBS samples were collected. 27 positive screening cases were found, for a provisional positive rate of 2.4 %.
- The positive rate of the 'HIVcheck.jp' screening test was nearly 8 times higher than that of conventional point of care testing. The effectiveness of this test was demonstrated.
- MSM in their 20s and 30s used the HIV Check most. For 34.1% of those in their 20s, 'HIVcheck.jp' was the first HIV testing in their lifetime.
- Because 'HIVcheck.jp' is available in areas highly frequented by MSM, it provides the opportunity for anonymous testing, counselling, and hospital consultations when needed.

# Discussion

- It is necessary to consider whether this new test can be continually provided to MSM in Japan.
- Collaboration with NGOs, communities, clinicians, researchers, administrations is critically important, while budgets for HIV prevention program are shrinking in Japan.
- The community center Akta, located in Japan's largest gay town Shinjuku 2-chome, functions as a key point for such collaboration.
- In preparation for the TOKYO 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, additional MSM measures are needed.