Willingness to receive HIV self-testing kits from recent sexual partners among men in Dar es Salam, Tanzania: findings from the STEP Project baseline survey

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# BACKGROUND

- Globally, men are less likely to access HIV services
- Disparity between females and males in all components of the HIV testing and treatment continuum
- Primary health services primarily focuses on services to women of reproductive age as ideal entry point for HIV services
  - Similar entry points for HIV services uncommon for men.

# BACKGROUND

- Addressing HIV services challenges among men is crucial to the global HIV/AIDS response.
- Men face several barriers to accessing HIV testing services.
  - HIV self-testing (HIVST) has shown potential in improving HIV testing coverage among men
  - HIV self-testing addresses several of these barriers :
    - privacy,
    - Convenience,
    - Stigma & concerns of visibility.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS & OBJECTIVES**



# OVERVIEW OF THE STEP PROJECT

- HIV Self-Testing Education and Promotion (STEP) Project:
  - Implemented in Dar es Salam, Tanzania
  - Five-year funded project
  - Aim to gather country-specific data on HIV Self-testing (HIVST)
  - Aim to promote HIVST and increase access to HIV testing and early diagnosis
- Participants recruited from 18 camps in Dar es Salam
- Inclusion criteria:
  - male,
  - aged 18 years or older,
  - camp members for at least three months,
  - self-reported as HIV-negative

### **METHODS**

#### DATA SOURCE:

Utilized data from the baseline survey of the STEP project

#### **OUTCOME VARIABLE:**

Willingness to receive HIVST kit from sexual partner (Dichotomous — Yes/No)

#### EXPLANATORY VARIABLES:

(1) participant's age
(2) educational level
(3) marital status
(4) number of sexual partners within 12 months
(5)awareness of HIVST
(6) previous HIV testing
(7) history of ever talking with sexual partner about HIVST
(8)history of ever performing HIV test with sexual partner

#### STATISTICAL ANALYSIS:

Logistic regression models

# RESULTS

- Participants' Characteristics (505 Participants)
- All heterosexual male
- Average age of 29 years
- Most single (63.8%) with average of 3 sexual partners in 12 months
- Most with Secondary level of education or higher (67.7%)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Awareness of HIVST		
Νο	290	57.4
Previous Use of HIVST		
Νο	462	91.5
Previous discussion of HIVST with sexual partner		
Yes	279	55.2
Previous HIV testing		
Yes	456	90.3
Previous testing for HIV with sexual partner		
Νο	310	61.4
Participants willingness to receive HIVST from sexual partner		
Yes	348	68.9

## RESULTS



Multivariate analysis:

 Awareness of HIVST (aOR = 4.3, 95%CI [2.6 – 7.2])

 Previous discussion of HIVST with sexual partner (aOR = 12.2, 95%CI [7.1 – 20.9])

 Previous testing for HIV with sexual partner (aOR = 2.1, 95%CI [1.2 – 3.9])

## DISCUSSION

- High level of willingness to receive HIVST from sexual partners among HIVnegative heterosexual men (69%).
  - Supports the potential for partner-delivered HIVST kit distribution channels

among men and their female partners.

- Awareness of HIVST was low (42.57%)
- Awareness of HIVST was a significant factor in men's willingness to receive HIVST

kit from their sexual partners

• Carefully developed messaging is integral to HIVST distribution (World Health Organization)

#### DISCUSSION

• Previous couple HIV testing and conversations about HIVST between couples were

significant factor in men's willingness to receive HIVST kit from their sexual partners.

• Strategies that foster HIVST conversations among couples and sexual partners

• Further research to understand practices that successfully and safely propound HIVST with sexual partners

• Employing peer educators in promotional strategies could prove beneficial

## DISCUSSION

- High proportion of previous HIV testing (90.3%)
  - High HIV testing rate explained by national Test and Treat campaign

launched in Tanzania in 2018

 Important to communicate need for repeat HIV testing with benefits for HIVST

## LIMITATIONS

Data from cross-sectional survey & cannot be utilized in assessing causal relationship

Outcome variable is hypothetical in nature.

 Responses generated could vary with future studies

- Potentially fewer men being willing

#### LIMITATIONS

- Overall objective to inform the potential for partner-delivered HIVST kit distribution but collected data solely from male participants
  - Lacked information on respondents' sexual partners and their willingness to offer HIVST kit to respondents.

## CONCLUSION

- Study findings indicate a high level of willingness to receive HIVST kits from sexual partners among men in Tanzania
- Partner-delivered HIVST kit distribution holds promise in improving HIV testing coverage
- Strategies to increase awareness of HIVST and support conversations about HIVST among couples are crucial
- Further research and implementation efforts needed to maximize the potential of partner-delivered HIVST in Tanzania

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