Online HIV self-test service in Almaty, Kazakhstan: key findings and implications

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Almaty Model for Epidemic Control (AMEC) is designed and implemented by a consortium of local organizations led by ICAP at Columbia University to create and implement a cost-effective, inclusive and sustainable city program that works to achieve HIV epidemic control in Almaty.

Elton John AIDS Foundation

June 2020-June 2024
Online HIV self-test service

- Launched in Almaty in February 2022, Elton John AIDS Foundation

- Operates from the AIDS Centre
  - Order processing
  - Packing HIV Self-Test kits
  - Shipping the order to chosen location
  - Client support and invitation to confirmatory testing and ART initiation (if a person reports a reactive test result)

- ICAP support:
  - Procurement of HIV self-tests
  - Development of online platform
  - Design and provision of print materials
  - Service promotion
  - Coordinator payment and support
  - Covers delivery costs
Online HIV self-test service

Self-test kit delivery locations

- AIDS Centre
- Private pharmacies
- Automated post box (tastamat)
- Paid courier home delivery
- Community-based organizations (CBO)

Self-test kit

- OraQuick self-test
- Informational materials on PrEP, harm reduction, HIV treatment and ART initiation
Online HIV self-test service: Key results, February 2022 - August 2023

- 2,370 Tested for HIV
- 1,161 Reported results
- 13 Newly diagnosed HIV

100% initiated ART

- Tastamats
- Pharmacies
- AIDS Center
- Courier Delivery
- CBO
## Service users’ self-reported characteristics, February 2022- August 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>TESTED</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>MEDIAN AGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1635</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>719</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonbinary</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans-woman</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2370</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### INFORMATION CHANNELS

- Social media: 19%
- AIDS Centre: 18%
- Internet search: 14%
- Amanbol: 11%
- Messengers: 10%
- Friends/relatives: 10%
- Hornet: 5%
- Anonymous SMS: 1%

### LATEST HIV TEST

- Never: 34%
- Last 6-12 months: 27%
- Over a year ago: 24%
- Last 6 months: 15%
Service users’ self-reported characteristics and reasons for ordering tests

**KEY POPULATION (N=1276)**

- 73% Non-KP (n=934)
- 25% MSM (n=319)

**KEY REASONS**

- 44% Out of curiosity
- 23% had unprotected sex
- 22% never tested before
- 3% had sex under alcohol or...
- 2% ordered test for a partner
- 1% had sex with PWUD
- 1% had sex with PLHIV
- 1% buy sex
- 1% received anonymous SMS

Non-KP (n=934) | MSM (n=319) | PWUD | SW | TGP
Service scale-up in Central Asia

- Almaty, Kazakhstan (February 2022)
- Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (August 2022)
- Dushanbe, Tajikistan (August 2022)
- Ust-Kamenogorsk, Kazakhstan (March 2023)
- Osh, Kyrgyzstan (March 2023)
- Astana, Kazakhstan (September 2023)
Lessons Learned

➢ Online HIV self-testing is an effective tool to expand HIV testing, especially among young people and first-time testers.

➢ Routine targeted promotion of the service among healthcare employees, CBO staff, closed messenger groups and social media is the key to service growth.

➢ Regular person-centered service quality improvement is important to ensure demand and sustainability of the service.
Спасибо
Thank you!

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