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Who's coming and who's coming back? Characteristics of rapid testers and return testers at the PRONTO! community-based HIV testing service.

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Introduction:

In Australia, all sexually active gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBM) are recommended to test for HIV annually and GBM classified as high risk recommended to test up to four times per year. PRONTO!, a community based rapid point-of-care testing service established in 2013 as a 24 month trial, aims to increase testing frequency among GBM. We report the characteristics of GBM testing at PRONTO! in the first year, including among those re-testing.

Methods:

Using pre-test survey data from PRONTO! clients, we describe characteristics of GBM testing at PRONTO! in the first year and compare the characteristics of six and three-month return-testers with less frequent testers using logistic regression.

Results:

In the first year, 1200 GBM tested least once for HIV at PRONTO! (median age=30 years; 60% Australian born; 17% naïve to HIV testing). At their first PRONTO! test, 823 (68.6%) GBM were classified as high risk; 199 (24.2%) returned to test within six months and 120 (14.6%) within three months. Among 377 GBM not classified as high risk, 72 (19.1%) returned within six months and 36 (9.6%) returned within three months. Six-month (OR=2.7, 95%CI: 1.93-3.81) and three-month (OR=2.4, 95%CI: 1.6-3.7) high risk return testers were more likely to report frequent (≤ 6 monthly) testing prior to testing at PRONTO!. Three-month return testers were also more likely to report recent condomless anal intercourse with casual partners (OR=1.5, 95%CI: 1.04-2.16).

Conclusion:

Based on the first 12 months of the trial, testing frequency at PRONTO! remains sub-optimal and comparable or lower than recently reported at high caseload clinics in Melbourne. High service acceptability and convenience reported by clients may be insufficient to drive frequent HIV testing at PRONTO!; proactive follow-up test booking has been implemented and integration of comprehensive STI screening is planned to enhance frequent testing.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

All authors have no conflicts to declare. The Victorian Department of Health funds the PRONTO! service which is operated by the Victorian AIDS Council, and the

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