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Factors associated with HIV testing among young men aged 18-24 years in Nkangala and OR Tambo districts, South Africa

Simukai Shamu^{1,2}, Sikhulile Khupakonke¹, Geoffrey Guloba¹, Corine Slabbert¹, Thato Farirai¹, Nkhensani Nkhwashu¹

¹Health Systems Strengthening Cluster, Foundation for Professional Development, Pretoria, South Africa; ²School of Public Health, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

INTRODUCTION

- Although women aged 15-24 years have higher HIV incidence (1.51) than men (0.49) more women than men know their HIV status in South Africa. Given that HIV in South Africa is largely heterosexually driven, the need to target men for HIV testing remains a priority.
- Efforts to reach men to test are needed and research must understand men's circumstances in order to effectively target them with HIV testing. Describing male

testers and non-testers is important as a starting point.

Aim of the study: This paper describes HIV testing history and factors associated with HIV testing among young men in Nkangala district, Mpumalanga province and OR Tambo district in the Eastern Cape province, South Africa.

METHODS

Design: A cross sectional clustered household survey was conducted in rural, peri-urban and urban sites in two districts between October 2017 and January 2018.

Sampling: Eligible participants (men aged 18-24 years) were systematically enrolled from each selected cluster.

Data collection: Self-administered interviews were conducted using personal digital assistants.

Measures: Participants were interviewed on their sexual history, media usage, HIV and TB testing history, willingness to conduct self-screening and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).

Data analysis: The prevalence of HIV testing was calculated. Multivariate analysis was conducted in Stata to identify factors associated with ever testing for HIV.

Table 2 shows factors associated with HIV testing. Having tested for TB (aOR 2.91; 95% CI: 1.79-4.73), using the print media (aOR 2.00; 95% CI: 1.35-2.97) or social networking websites (aOR 1.68; 95% CI: 1.08-2.64), having interest in using PrEP (aOR 1.54; 95% CI: 1.05-2.24), were positively associated with HIV testing. Participants not willing to self-screen for HIV (aOR 0.51; 95% CI 0.33-0.80), never having sex (aOR 0.32; 95% CI: 0.21-0.51) and having low HIV risk perception (aOR 0.61; 95% CI: 0.43-0.89) had lower odds of reporting HIV testing. Demographic characteristics associated with HIV testing among males were neither being married nor living with a partner (aOR 2.30) and being a student (aOR 1.71).

Category of factors	Factors	aOR	95% CI	p-value
Demographic	Being a student	1.71	1.20-2.44	0.003
	Not being married/partnered	2.30	1.02-5.19	0.044
Media factors	Uses social networking sites	1.68	1.08-2.64	0.022
	Read print media	2.00	1.34-2.97	0.001
HIV/TB risk factors	Ever tested for Tuberculosis	2.91	1.79-4.73	<0.0001
	Never having sex	0.33	0.21-0.51	<0.0001
	Not willing to conduct HIV self screening	0.51	0.33-0.80	<0.0001
	Having low HIV risk perception	0.61	0.43-0.89	0.009
	Having interest in using Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)	1.54	1.05-2.24	0.025

RESULTS

A total of 955 young men were interviewed (88% response rate). Of these 43.1% were students, 93% were single and participants' median age was 20 (IQR19-22) years. About 60.6% reported ever testing for HIV and 75.3% ever having sex, while 19.1% ever testing for tuberculosis (TB).

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of participants by HIV testing

	Total		Tested		Not tested		p-value
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Age: 18-21y (vs 22-24 years)	418	45.1	255	52.8	163	36.8	<0.0001
Married, partnered and/or lives with a partner	831	88.5	417	84.8	414	92.6	<0.0001
Occupation: Student (vs workers)	493	52.6	248	62.0	292	54.4	<0.0001
Member of a social club	403	43.6	224	46.2	179	40.8	0.098
Receives a social grant	109	11.8	59	12.1	50	11.4	0.75
Income source:							
Employer	90	9.7	60	12.4	30	6.8	
Family/partner	741	80.0	377	77.9	364	82.4	
Social Grant	95	10.3	47	9.7	48	10.9	0.015
Living in a substandard house	50	5.4	24	4.9	26	5.9	0.521

DISCUSSION

The study highlights the importance of and calls for interventions around HIV prevention through TB/HIV integration, PrEP and behaviour change, through the media, around self-risk perception and safe sex among young men. HIV prevention interventions must also target married or partnered men and the student male population.

Key words: HIV testing; young men; pre-exposure prophylaxis; South Africa



Dr Simukai Shamu
FPD
PO Box 75324,
Lynnwood Ridge,
0040, South Africa
sshamu@foundation.co.za



Sikhulile Khupakonke
FPD
PO Box 75324,
Lynnwood Ridge,
0040, South Africa
sikhulilek@foundation.co.za



Geoffrey Guloba
FPD
PO Box 75324,
Lynnwood Ridge,
0040, South Africa
geoffreyg@foundation.co.za



Corine Slabbert
FPD
PO Box 75324,
Lynnwood Ridge,
0040, South Africa
corines@foundation.co.za



Thato Farirai
FPD
PO Box 75324,
Lynnwood Ridge,
0040, South Africa
thatof@foundation.co.za



Nkhensani Nkhwashu
FPD
PO Box 75324,
Lynnwood Ridge,
0040, South Africa
nkhensanin@foundation.co.za