

Introduction

- GetCheckedOnline** (GCO) launched in Vancouver, British Columbia (BC), Canada, in September 2014, offering online access to sexually-transmitted infection (STI) testing
- In February 2016, the program expanded to smaller urban, suburban, and rural communities in south central BC (Interior Health Authority) and Vancouver Island (Island Health Authority)
- Regional differences may impact the uptake and use of GCO

Objective

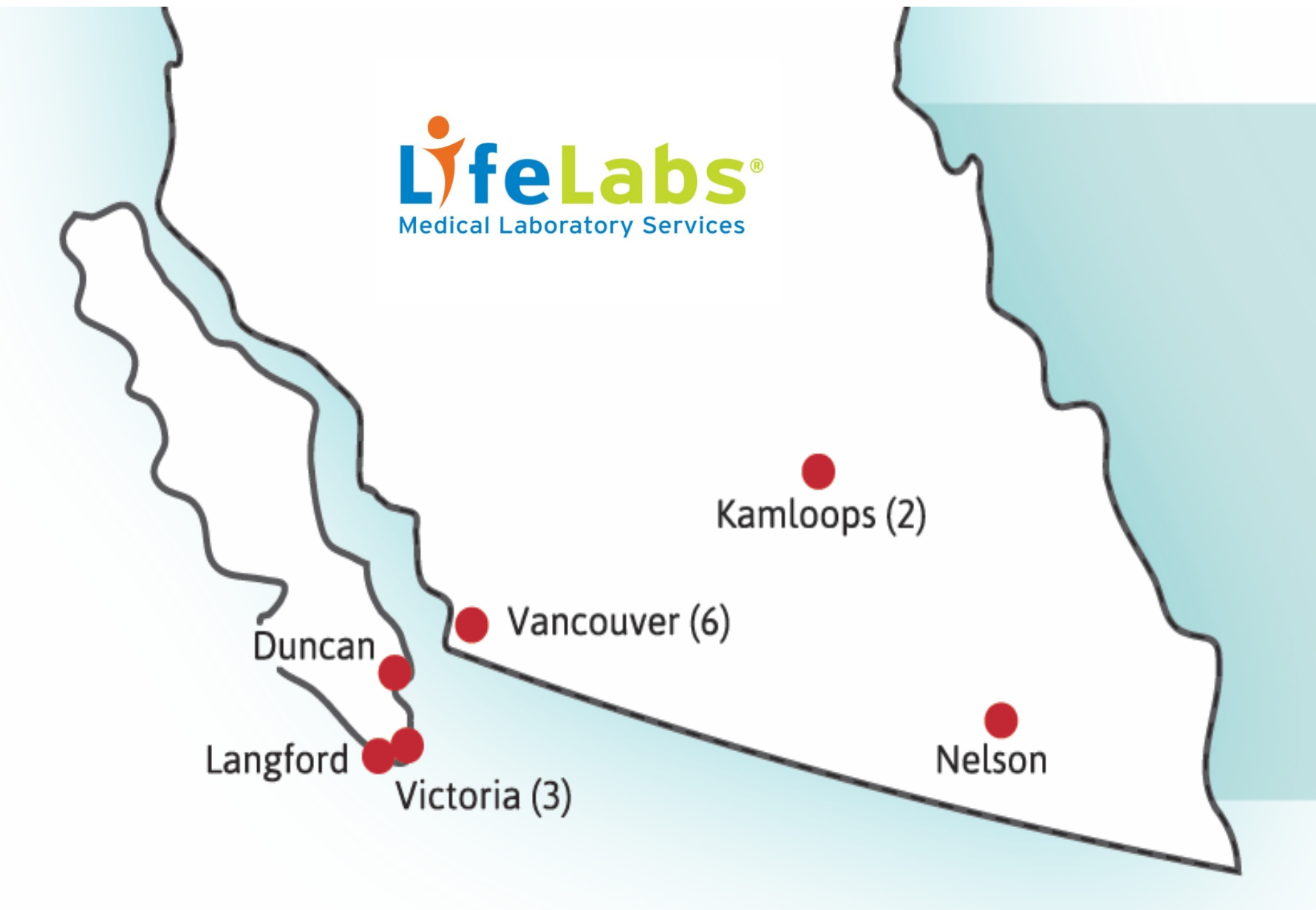
- To examine differences in GCO uptake, client socio-demographics, testing motivation, and sexual health histories between Vancouver and expansion sites during the first 3 years of program expansion
- During the study period, 6,366 unique clients completed testing, with higher proportions of clients completing testing in Island and Interior health regions compared to Vancouver (**Table 1**)
- In total, 10,635 test episodes were completed and STI positivity was higher in Interior compared to Vancouver
- Compared to Island and Interior health regions, Vancouver clients who had tested were older and greater proportions identified as men and as non-White (**Table 2**)
- In Vancouver, higher proportions of testers were MSM and reported four or more sex partners
- Greater proportions of testers from the expansion regions reported being symptomatic and STI risk factors (contact with STI-positive partner, condomless sex with >1 partner) at time of testing
- Higher proportions of clients in the expansion regions reported their first GCO test as a first-time STI/HIV test



Methods

- GCO program data and laboratory testing data were included from February 2016 to January 2019
- Variables examined include:
 - Accounts created and specimens submitted
 - Test episode positivity for chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, HIV, and/or hepatitis C
 - Client-level characteristics:** age, gender, ethnicity, history of STI/HIV testing (as reported at first completed testing episode)
 - Episode-level variables:** symptoms, sexual contact with someone who might have an STI, men who have sex with men (MSM), condomless vaginal or anal sex with >1 partner in past 3 months, number of sexual partners in past 3 months, STI diagnosis in past 12 months
- Bivariate analyses comparing Vancouver with each of the expansion regions (Island and Interior) were conducted using chi-square tests

Figure: GCO implementation sites in BC



Results

Table 1: GCO uptake by region, Feb 2016-Jan 2019 (BOLD: significantly different from Vancouver, p<0.05)

Measure	Vancouver n (% of previous)	Island n (% of previous)	Interior n (% of previous)
Per client:			
Accounts created	6382	2992	1805
Completed testing	3320 (52%)	1922 (64%)	1124 (62%)
Per test episode:			
Specimens submitted	5799	3155	1681
Positive result	272 (5%)	138 (4%)	102 (6%)

Table 2: Socio-demographic and behavioural characteristics by region, Feb 2016-Jan 2019 (BOLD: significantly different from Vancouver, p<0.05)

Measure	Vancouver n (%)	Island n (%)	Interior n (%)
Per client:	N=3320	N=1922	N=1124
Age <30 years	44%	52%	59%
Men (trans-inclusive)	65%	55%	51%
White	50%	64%	62%
Never tested previously for STIs	18%	24%	33%
Never tested previously for HIV	16%	19%	25%
Per test episode:	N=5799	N=3155	N=1681
MSM	32%	25%	14%
Symptoms	15%	18%	26%
Contact to STI	8%	9%	12%
Condomless sex with >1 partner	44%	46%	49%
4+ sex partners	30%	24%	18%
Previous STI diagnosis	16%	12%	13%

Conclusions

- Our findings highlight important regional differences in program use, socio-demographics, and sexual risk behaviours among GCO clients
- Higher proportions of GCO clients from outside of Vancouver are first-time STI/HIV testers, highlighting the program's impact on reducing testing barriers
- Proportions of clients testing and test positivity are higher outside Vancouver, suggesting that GCO has important impacts as an STI testing program regionally
- Further research is needed in describing predictors of STI positivity, repeat testing patterns, and differences in barriers to testing across regions
- Regional differences in testing motivations and sexual histories may affect program promotion and outreach



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For more information:

To talk during or after the conference please email mark.gilbert@bccdc.ca. To find out more about our research projects including this one please visit our website www.lovebytesresearch.ca.

