

Differences in reported testing barriers between clients of an online STBBI testing service and a provincial STI clinic in Vancouver, Canada

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STI & HIV World Congress 2017

Conflict of interest

I have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Online testing programs for STBBI

- Feasibility, proof of concept demonstrated
- Generally considered to overcome barriers to accessing testing services
- Key knowledge gaps:
 - Contribution as part of a spectrum of testing services?
 - Is use patterned on existing social gradients?



[HOW IT WORKS](#) ▾

[STI TESTING](#) ▾

[PRIVACY](#) ▾

Want to **get tested** for sexually transmitted infections?



sign up



print lab form



give samples at lab



get results

What can I test for?

Chlamydia
Gonorrhea
HIV
Syphilis
Hepatitis C

What's GetCheckedOnline?

GetCheckedOnline is a new and easy way to test for sexually transmitted infections (STI) in British Columbia, Canada. In a few steps, you can print a lab form, then go to a participating LifeLabs site to give your samples and get your results online or over the phone.

Create an Account

WITH VALID PROMO CODE

 **Existing Users**

Password

Sign-In

[Forgot your Password?](#)

Find a Lab Location

[Click Here](#)



GetCheckedOnline is available at select LifeLabs locations in British Columbia.

What's New?

Objective

- To determine whether GCO clients differed from STI clinic clients
 - Shed insights on why people would choose to test online vs. in a clinic setting
- Hypotheses:*
 - GCO clients would more frequently report STBBI testing barriers
 - GCO clients more likely to have access to technology and higher digital literacy



* Based on formative research by our team: Hottes et al. JMIR 2012;14(2):e41; Farrell et al. GLMA conference 2015; Gilbert et al. JMIR 2013;15(11):e254; Gilbert et al. STD & AIDS World Congress 2013.

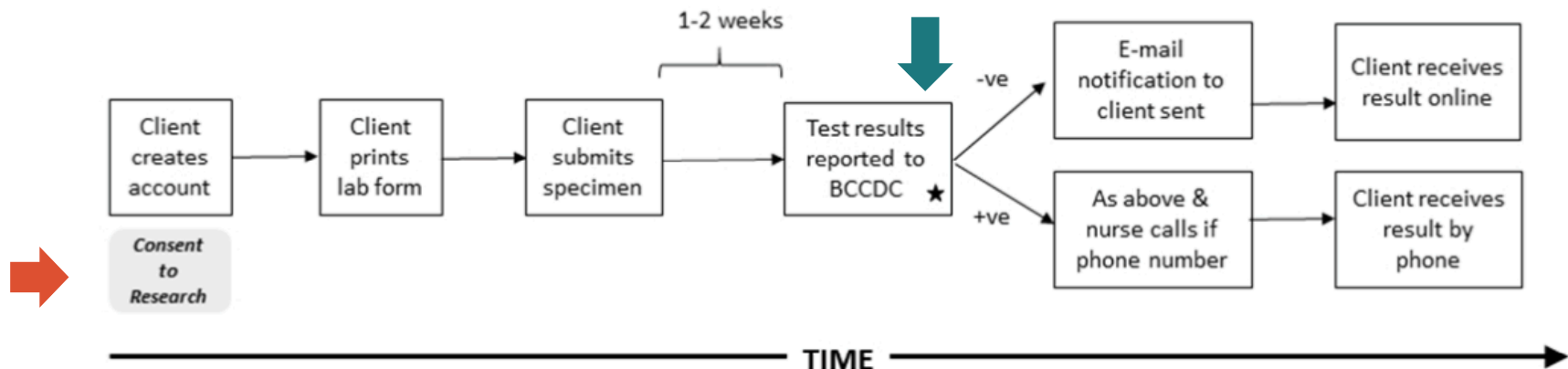
Methods:

- Observational comparative design, not experimental
- Comparison group was STI clinic clients in settings where GCO was promoted in Vancouver, BC
 - Provincial STI clinic (BC Centre for Disease Control)
 - Two community STI clinics accessed by GBMSM
- Online survey

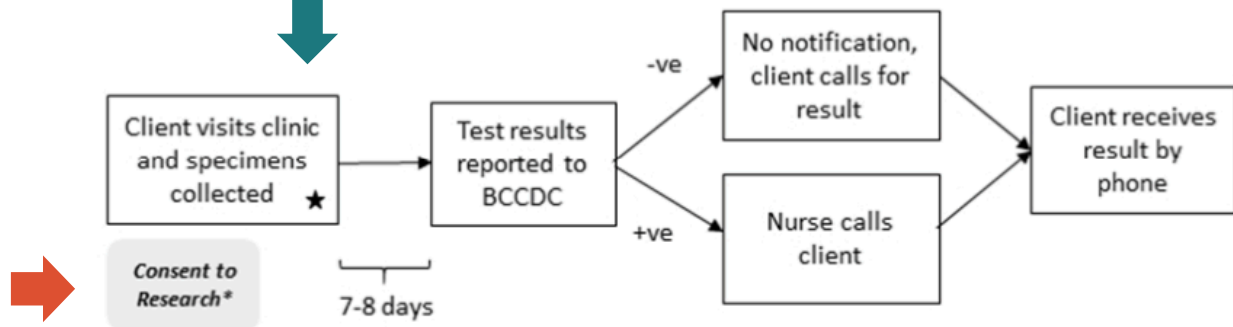
Methods: Recruitment (GCO, Provincial clinic)

- June 2015 to April 2016


GetCheckedOnline Clients:



Clinic Clients:



Methods: Recruitment (cont)



How was your testing experience today?

We want to hear from you!

The BC Centre for Disease Control is doing a survey to understand how you feel about your testing experience today and how we can improve our services.

See the other side of this card for more information.

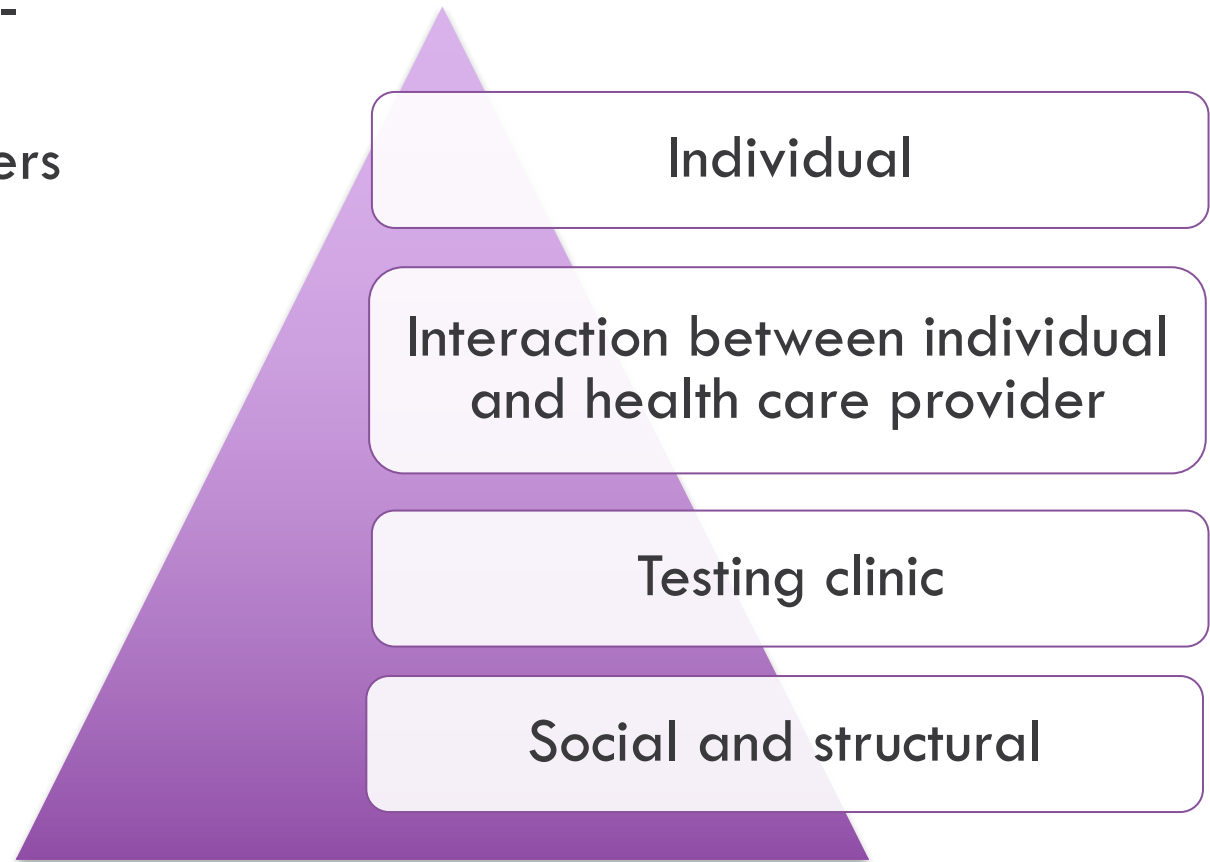
To sign-up, please visit:
<http://surveys.phsa.ca/s/signup>

Research Study Volunteers Needed

- Also at two community STI clinics for GBMSM via recruitment poster, cards
- Eligibility criteria:
 - Recently tested for an STI or HIV
 - At least 15 years of age
- \$20 gift card

Methods: Online survey

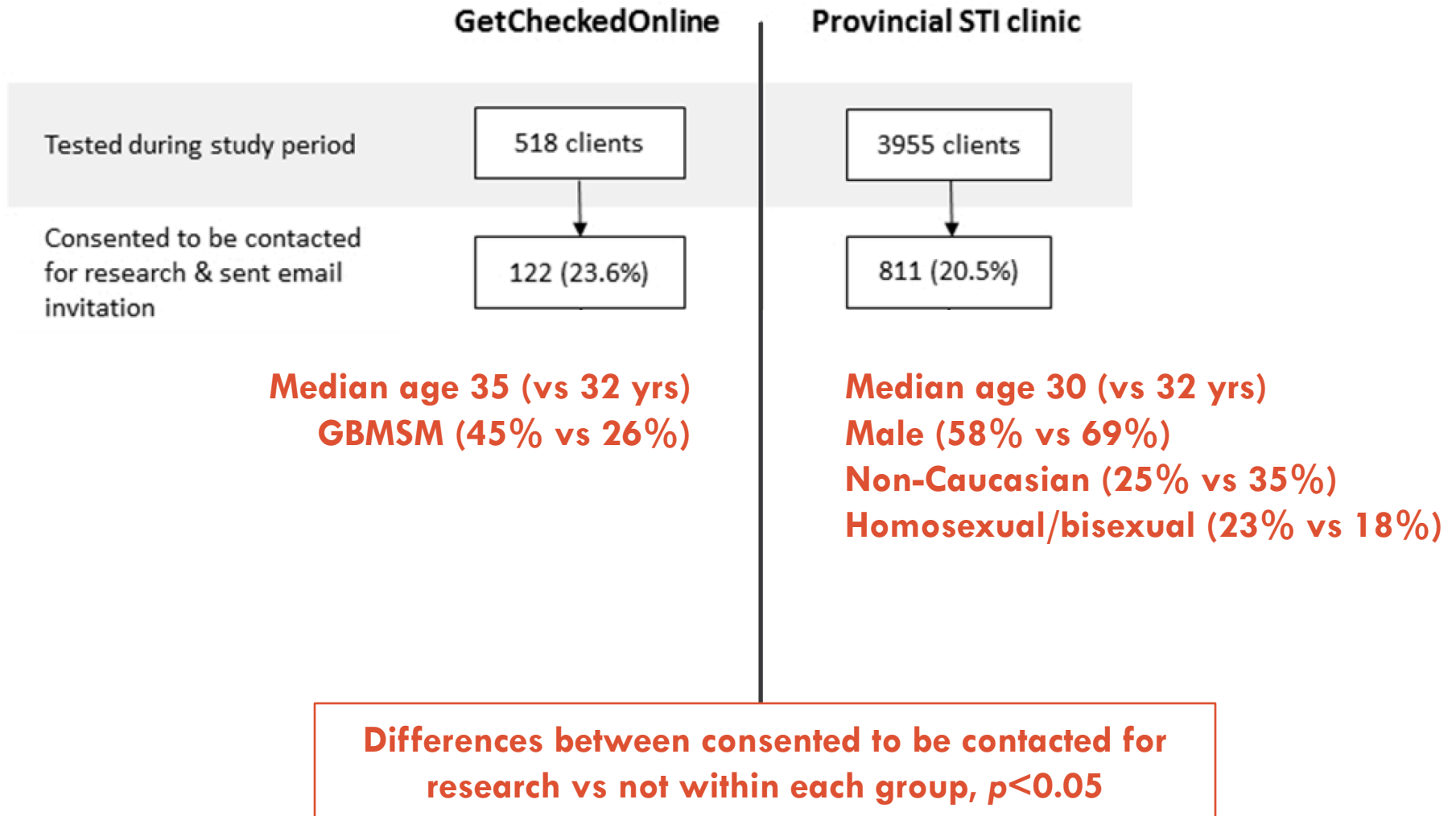
- Developed multi-level framework for testing barriers and facilitators:
- Piloted and revised
- 105 questions total, English language



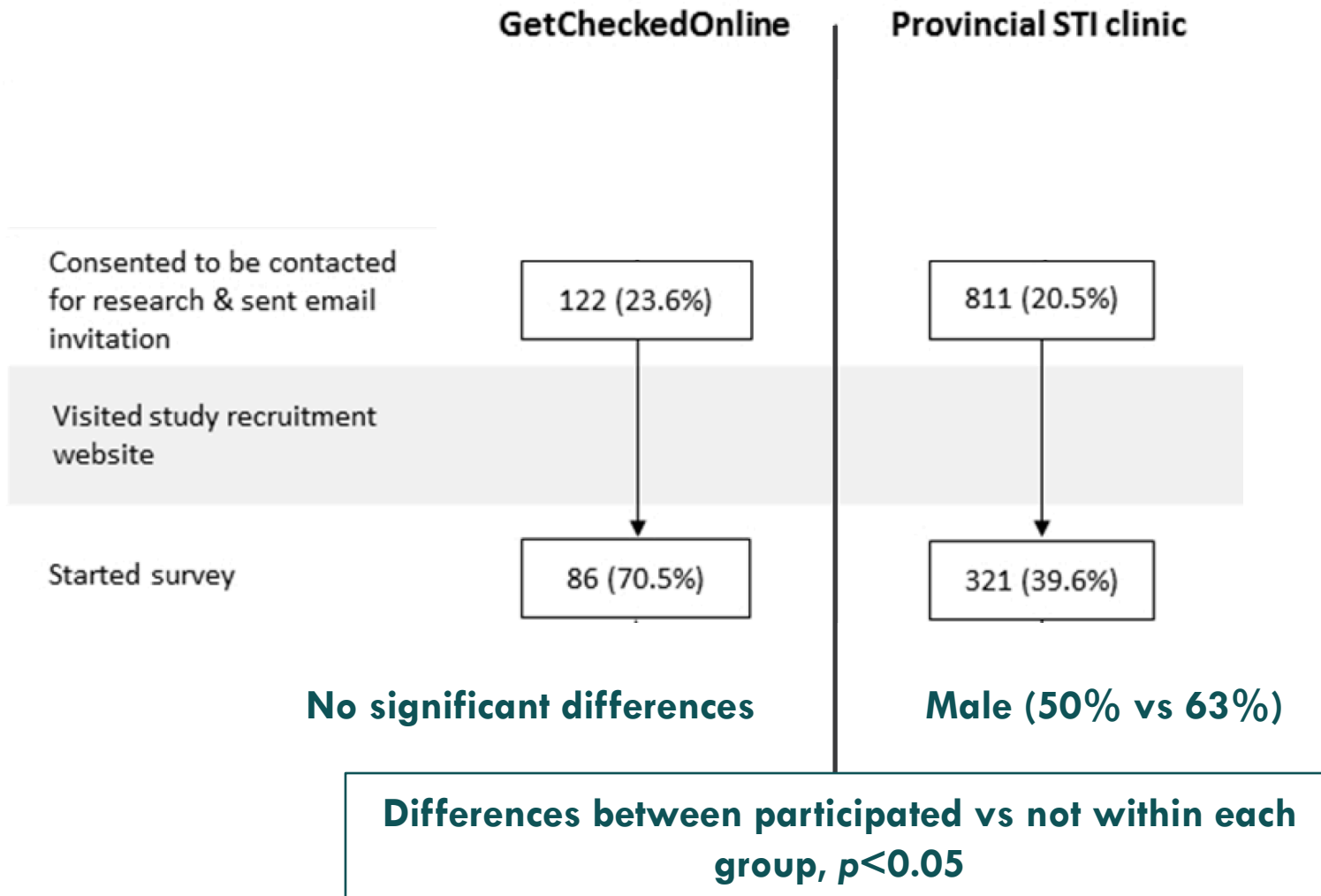
Methods: Statistical analysis

- Determined potential recruitment biases
 - Consented to be contacted for research, vs. not
 - Participated, vs. not
 - Chi-square or t-test, $p < 0.05$
- Bivariate analyses of survey data
 - Chi-square or t-test, $p < 0.01$

Results: Recruitment



Results: Recruitment (cont.)



Results: Recruitment (cont).

Tested during study period

Consented to be contacted
for research & sent email
invitation

Visited study recruitment
website

Started survey

Completed survey

Community STI clinics

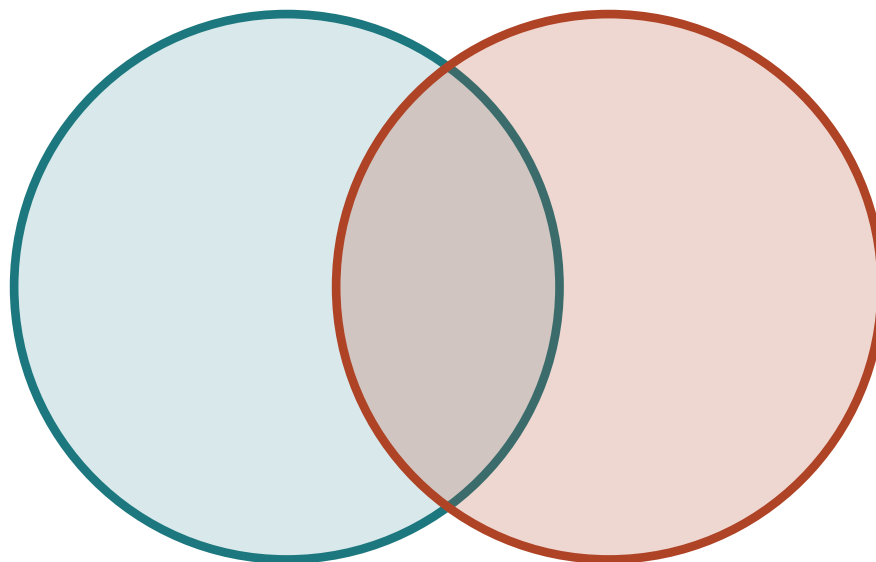
5015 clients

38 (0.8%)

28 (73.7%)

28 (100%)

Results: Sample overlap



Of 86 GCO clients:
45% had tested at a
recruitment clinic

Of 349 clinic clients:
43% aware of GCO
(7% had used site)

Results: Comparison of GCO and Clinic clients

Client Characteristic*	GCO n=86	Clinic n=349
Important to access online health resources	76%	57%
Reason for last test – Routine test	59%	42%
Reason for last test – symptoms, or contact to STI	9%	30%
Uncomfortable discussing sexual history with HCP (any)	16%	5%
Fear of being judged by HCP when providing sexual history	29%	15%
Usually go to family physician for care when sick	55%	40%
Delayed testing in past year due to clinic distance	24%	9%
Last time tested in a clinic, agreed that:		
Found clinic hours to be convenient	59%	77%
Had to wait a long time to see a doctor or nurse	48%	20%
Median age	35 yrs	30 yrs
Gay, bisexual or other man who has sex with men	41%	23%
Embarrassing to test for an STI or HIV	19%	6%

*displaying significant results only at $p < 0.01$.

Discussion

- Consistent with our formative research, GCO clients more likely to report
 - Delays in testing
 - Barriers to accessing clinic-based services
 - Barriers related to interacting with a health care provider
 - Stigma related to STI/HIV testing
- Did not see differences in technology access/literacy, challenging our assumptions about digital natives & digital divides
- Saw few differences by socio-demographics



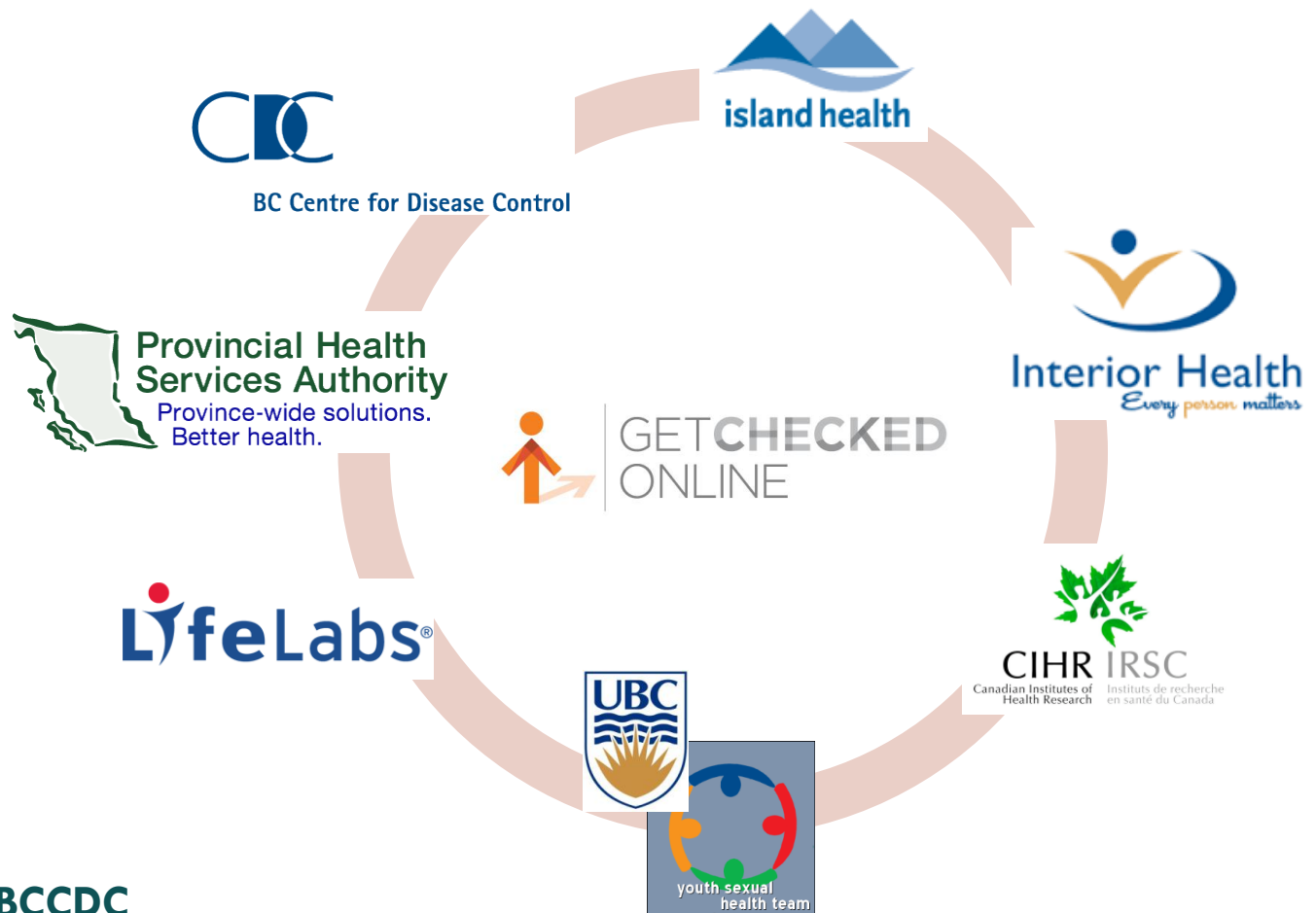
Limitations

- Online survey
- Generalizable to urban areas, with accessible, low-threshold clinic services
- Natural experiment
 - Overlap between groups suggests valid comparison
- Further research in different settings, regions and populations needed

In conclusion

- Online STBBI testing services overcome access and provider-related barriers to testing, and may not exacerbate existing inequities in testing access
- Clinic barriers could be addressed by expanding clinic access
- However, other barriers reflect underlying system issues and are difficult to address
 - Stigma, appropriateness and safety of clinical services





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Thanks

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Researching Digital Interventions to Improve Sexual Health

www.lovebytesresearch.ca