

Article: Gilbert M, Thomson K, Salway T, Haag D, Grennan T, Fairley CK, Buchner C, Krajdien M, Kendall P, Shoveller J, Ogilvie G. Differences in experiences of barriers to STI testing between clients of the internet-based diagnostic testing service GetCheckedOnline.com and an STI clinic in Vancouver, Canada. Sexually Transmitted Infections 2018.



## What is this study about?

Internet-based testing services for sexually-transmitted and blood-borne infections (STBBI) are intended to make it easier to get tested. It's possible though, that people who use these services already have good access to testing, widening the gap for people who need to get tested the most.

To test these scenarios, we compared the experiences of people using the internet-based STBBI testing service GetCheckedOnline.com (GCO) to people getting tested in person at an STI clinic.

## What did we do?

For 10 months after GCO's launch, clients of GCO and a provincial STI clinic were invited to take part in an online survey that asked questions about STI testing history, reasons that motivate people to test for STIs, and perceived barriers to testing. In total, 73 GCO clients and 321 clinic clients provided their input.

## What did we find?

Compared to clinic clients, GCO clients were more likely to be older and identify as men who have sex with men. We didn't see any other differences in demographics.

Clients using GCO were more likely to have delayed testing in the past due to difficulty accessing clinic-based services, and to have concerns about interacting in person with health care providers. GCO clients were also more likely to report feeling embarrassed about STI testing in general. Surprisingly, we did not find any differences in use of technology or skills using the internet between GCO or clinic clients.

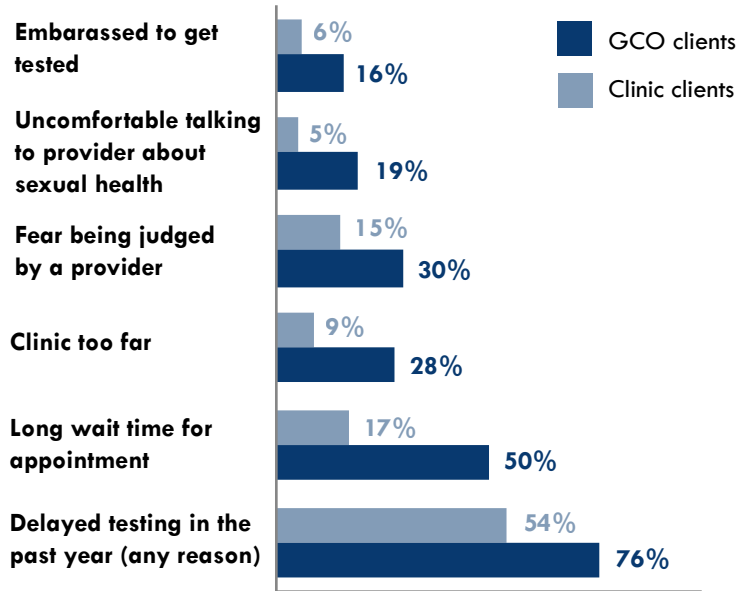


Chart comparing testing barriers reported by GCO clients and provincial STI clinic clients

## Why is this important?

This is the first study to compare internet-based to clinic-based testers and test assumptions about the value of internet-based testing services for STBBI.

We found that GCO was being used by people who face more barriers to getting tested for STBBI, and not just by people had higher socio-economic status or who were more tech-savvy.

Internet testing services such as GCO are likely a good way to reach people that are having difficulty getting tested through typical face-to-face testing services.

Want to know how GetCheckedOnline works? Take a video tour at [getcheckedonline.com](http://getcheckedonline.com)