

Article: Mark Gilbert, Travis Salway Hottes, Thomas Kerr, Darlene Taylor, Christopher K. Fairley, Richard Lester et al. Factors Associated with Intention to Use Internet-based Testing for Sexually Transmitted Infections among Men who have Sex with Men. Journal of Medical Internet Research 2013;15(11):254 ([Link](#))

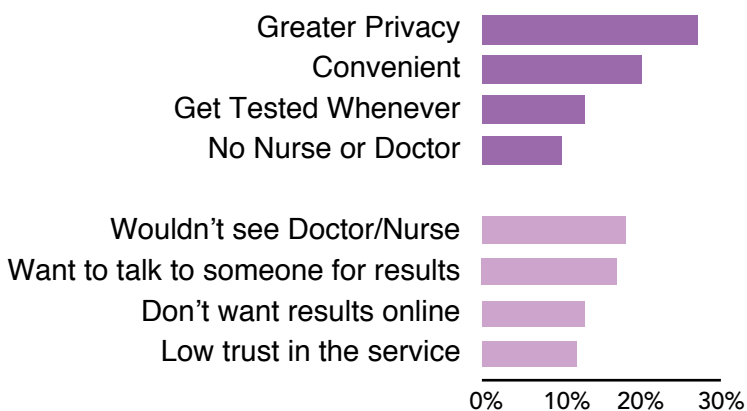
What is the study about?

The BC Centre for Disease Control is developing a website where someone can create an account, print a laboratory requisition and take to it to a private lab, and get test results online or by phone. This internet-based testing service – called Get Checked Online – includes testing for HIV, Hepatitis C and sexually transmitted infections. In this study, we wanted to understand which gay and bisexual men in Canada would use this service, and what they thought about it.

How was the study done?

We included questions related to internet-based testing on the online Sex Now Survey in 2011, which included 8,388 gay and bisexual men in Canada. Following a brief description of internet-based testing, we asked men whether they intended to use the service as well as a question regarding perceived benefits and drawbacks. We then used multivariable modeling to look at what groups of gay and bisexual men were more or less likely to intend to use the service.

Greatest perceived benefit (top) and drawback (bottom) of internet-based testing:



“We found that most gay and bisexual men intended to use internet-based testing when it becomes available, and that this was true no matter what groups of men we looked at.”

What did the study find?

We found that most gay and bisexual men intended to use internet-based testing when it becomes available (72% overall), and that this was true no matter what groups of men we looked at. In our final model, men who were more “technology-savvy” (e.g., used the internet to cruise for sex partners or look for health information) or who said that they faced challenges to getting tested otherwise (e.g., weren’t “out” to their health provider, or delayed or avoided testing due to privacy concerns or access issues) were more likely to intend to use the service. Intention was also higher among younger gay and bisexual men, and we found differences by sexual identity and HIV status as well.

Why is this study important?

While gay and bisexual men are generally considered to use and benefit from internet-based testing, our study is the first to look at what gay and bisexual men think about it. Get Checked Online has been designed for gay and bisexual men (among other populations) and this study confirms that uptake is likely to be high when it becomes available. As the main reason for internet-based testing is to reduce the barriers or challenges to getting tested, the findings suggest that men with these challenges will in fact use the service. We will use the findings from this study to guide the development, launch and promotion of Get Checked Online in BC, and will repeat this survey after the service is in place to see which gay and bisexual do in fact use the service.