

# Reach and use of an internet-based sexually-transmitted and blood-borne infection testing survey during scale-up to urban, suburban and rural communities in British Columbia, Canada

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## Background

- In British Columbia (BC), Canada, research during the pilot phase of *GetCheckedOnline*, an online sexually-transmitted and blood-borne infection (STBBI) testing service, found it effective in improving access to testing.
- Since launching in 2014, the service has expanded to urban, suburban and rural communities: Wave 1 (2016): Kamloops, Nelson and Victoria; Wave 2 (2019-2020): Kimberley, Maple Ridge.
- Objective:** To assess post-expansion implementation outcomes (awareness, use, and intention to use) of *GetCheckedOnline* in these communities.

## Methods

- Between July-Sept 2022, we conducted a cross-sectional survey in each community, recruiting in-person and online with oversampling among populations more likely affected by STBBI.
- Eligible participants were BC Residents  $\geq 16$  years old, sexually active ( $\geq 1$  oral, anal or vaginal intercourse in past year).
- Questions evaluated awareness, use, and intention to use *GetCheckedOnline*.

## Results

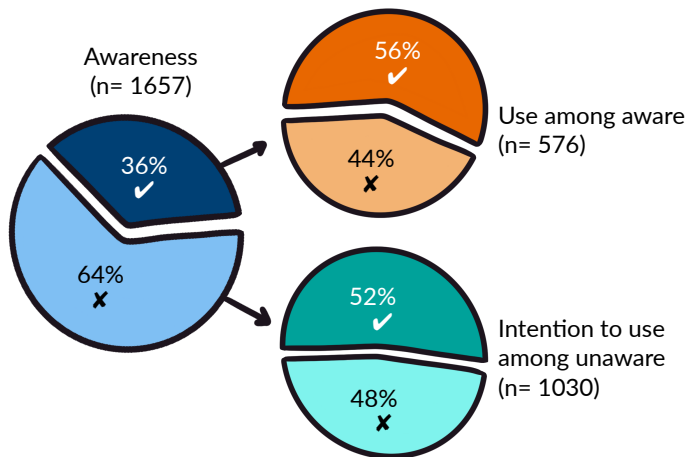


Table 2: Outcomes among participants living in communities according to expansion wave

Expansion Wave	Awareness	Use among Aware
Wave 1 (2016)	39.6%	60.1%
Wave 2 (2019-2020)	18.1%	38.2%

Other outcomes observed:

- 66.8% (990/1483) reported experiencing barriers to accessing provider-based testing in the past year (e.g., long wait times, not knowing where to access testing).
- For 91.1% of participants (1334/1465) it was very easy/easy to go online.

Table 1: Description of study sample

Characteristic	n = 1657
<b>Age</b>	
Mean	33 years
Standard Deviation	11.75 years
<b>Gender</b>	
	n (%)*
Man	459 (30.7%)
Woman	784 (52.5%)
Gender Diverse	251 (16.8%)
Cisgender	1246 (89.8%)
Transgender	151 (10.2%)
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
	n (%)
White	1099 (68.3%)
Indigenous	208 (12.9%)
People of Colour	301 (18.7%)
<b>Non-heterosexual Sexual Identity (yes)</b>	793 (53.0%)
<b>Annual pre-tax income in 2021 &lt; \$20,000</b>	392 (26.9%)
<b>Drug Use (Illegal/non-prescribed, past year) (yes)</b>	566 (39.1%)
<b>Ever been homeless (yes)</b>	315 (21.5%)
<b>Never tested for STBBIs (yes)</b>	319 (20.7%)
<b>Reported 3+ sexual partners in the last year (yes)</b>	463 (30.9%)
<b>Diagnosed with 1+ STBBI during past year (yes)</b>	104 (7.8%)

\* Percentages were calculated on the basis of valid responses

## Conclusion

- Our study suggests *GetCheckedOnline* is improving access to STBBI testing in these communities, as 20% of participants – representing half of those aware of the service – had used the service in a sample where barriers to accessing provider-based testing were common.
- Communities where *GetCheckedOnline* had been available longer had higher awareness and use of the service
- Given the high intention to use, further promotion of *GetCheckedOnline* to increase awareness may be beneficial.

## Acknowledgements & Conflicts of Interest:

This study was funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (FRN: #CTW-1553878). We are thankful for the contribution of our Community Advisory Board, ANKORS and ASK Wellness Society. The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.