



Missed opportunities for STI testing: a mixed methods study of the impact of a stand-alone HIV testing service

K Ryan, D Leitinger, A Wilkinson, S Powell, A Pedrana, A Bowring, M Hellard, M Stooové

Background - PRONTO!

- Partnership between Victorian Department of Health, VAC, Burnet Institute
- 24 month trial service (Aug2013-Aug2015)
 - Now funded for four more years



- Rapid point of care test
- Community based
- Shop front
- Peer led
- Free
- After hours (4-8pm Tues-Fri, 1-5pm Sat)
- Stand alone HIV service



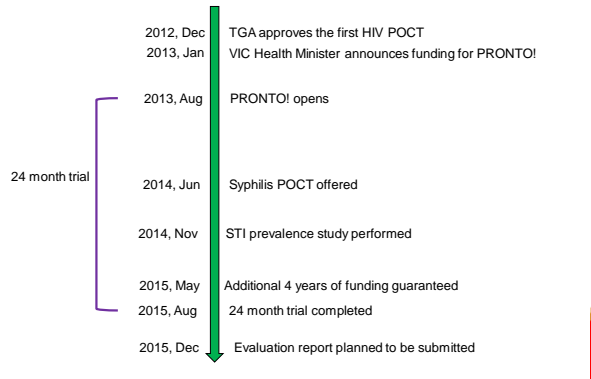
Background - Comprehensive Testing

- Importance of STI treatment and diagnosis is well known
- Reflected in Australian clinical guidelines
- Multi faceted STI testing promotion
 - "Drama downunder"
 - Clinical services



STIGMA Group. (2014). Australian Sexually Transmitted Infection & HIV Testing Guidelines 2014 for Asymptomatic Men Who Have Sex With Men.
 AFAO. (2014) https://www.afao.org.au/library/topic/msm/DDU-Binder-May-2014_final.pdf
 Wilkinson et. al. The impact of a social marketing campaign on HIV and sexually transmissible infection testing among men who have sex with men in Australia. (under review)

Background - PRONTO!



Background - PRONTO!

- 1228 GBM tested at PRONTO! in the first 12 months of operations
 - Increasing appointment occupancy over time
 - 70% classified as high risk
- Early acceptability results were very positive
 - 77% prefer testing with a peer than a doctor or nurse
 - 96% likely to return to PRONTO! for HIV testing
- But... low proportion return within recommended timeframe

Aims of this study

Explore the impact of PRONTO! not offering comprehensive STI testing on

- Frequency of testing for HIV at PRONTO!
- Intention to test for STIs at other services
- Explore motivators and barriers to testing

Ryan et. al. (2015) Who's coming and who's coming back? Characteristics of rapid testers and return testers at the PRONTO! community-based HIV testing service.
 Leitinger et. al. (2014) Acceptability and client engagement at a community-based and peer-led HIV testing service for men who have sex with men



Methods – PRONTO! Evaluation Survey

- Data collection
 - Recruitment: All clients between 15May2014-06Oct2014
 - Questions: demographics, testing history, testing intentions, sexual risk, acceptability, marketing
 - Reimbursed with \$20 e-gift voucher
- Data analysis
 - Restricted to men, report male to male sex, aged over 18 years, completed >90% of survey
 - Descriptive statistics

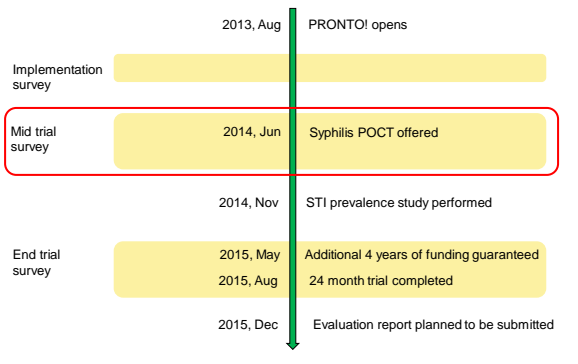


Methods - Focus Groups

- Data Collection
 - Recruitment: Clients completing the periodic survey
 - 2x focus groups held at BI, lasting 90 minutes each
 - Participants reimbursed \$40 for their time
 - 16 men participated
- Data Analysis
 - Recorded, transcribed
 - Thematic analysis



Methods – Evaluation timeline



Results- Evaluation Survey

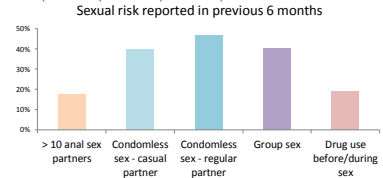
Completed by 42% of invited clients (n=298)

Demographics

- Age – 31 years (median)
- Country of birth – 65% Australian born
- Sexual identity – 92% gay

Sexual Risk

Of those who reported any anal sex partner in previous 6 months

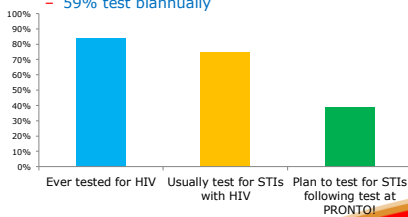


Results – Evaluation Survey

Intention to test for STIs

Testing history

- 84% have ever tested for HIV
 - 37% usually test at sexual health clinic, 23% at high caseload GP
 - 59% test biannually



Results – Evaluation Survey

Frequency of testing at PRONTO!

- Return to PRONTO!
 - 94% likely to return to PRONTO!
 - 85% likely to test more frequently for HIV now that PRONTO! is open
 - 80% will choose PRONTO! in preference to other HIV testing services

However...

- 20% reported reason they would NOT return to PRONTO! was they prefer to test for other STIs at the same time as HIV



Results – Evaluation Survey

- Free text comments...

"The staff are wonderful. I like the peer based approach. The only thing they need is to run the full STI testing suite, self swabs and a urine sample can't be that hard to organise?... Until it actually rolls out, I wont be returning unfortunately..."



Results – Focus Groups

Convenience of testing

"It made it less of a chore, like I never thought getting a test could be that easy, I just made an appointment half an hour before I was meeting my friends to go get burgers at Fitzroy, and I got it done and walked down Smith St and met them and had dinner, and was like "I've just had a test"
- FG2

"Just because I don't want to go to two places, I would probably just go to my one place and get everything done in one, in one sitting"
- FG1



Results – Focus Groups

- Motivators to test for STIs

"HIV's the big concern, but anything else there's either symptoms or...less regularly getting tested, less regularly depending on, you know, what's going on, if you think you've had any exposure to anything, so...yeah, that wouldn't affect my using the service"



Summary

Due to the stand alone HIV testing model employed at PRONTO!:

- Men testing at PRONTO! delay testing for STIs at other services
- Men delay, or wont return to PRONTO! to test for HIV in the absence of comprehensive STI testing



Future directions

- Ongoing evaluation
- Strategic planning for introduction of STI testing
- Provide recommendations to other jurisdictions in peer based model design



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