

Reach and acceptability of an online HIV/STI testing service among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men living in British Columbia, Canada

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BACKGROUND:

- Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM) in British Columbia (BC) have high incidence of HIV/STI, and many report barriers to accessing testing.
- GetCheckedOnline (GCO, getcheckedonline.com) was launched in 2014 to reduce these barriers.
- GCO involves 3 main steps:
 - Create account, complete an assessment, and print a laboratory requisition (online)
 - Provide blood, urine, and swab specimens at a laboratory (in-person)
 - Receive test results (online or by phone)
- During 2015, promotional efforts were focused on inviting GBMSM to access the service.

OBJECTIVE:

- To assess reach and acceptability of GCO within the BC GBMSM community, 2 years after its launch

SURVEY METHODS:

- Eligibility:** self-identification as GBMSM; age >16; English-speaking; resides in BC
- Recruitment** (July - September 2016), see **Figure 1:**
 - Vancouver Pride events, bars, streets (in-person surveys)
 - Sexual health clinics targeting GBMSM (clinic surveys)
 - Social media, gay hook-up apps and websites (online surveys)
- Analysis was descriptive, focused on the following **outcomes:**
 - Awareness of GCO
 - Use of GCO
 - Intention to use GCO in future
 - Perceived benefits/drawbacks of GCO

RESULTS:

- N=1272 GBMSM participated
- Median age was 38 (range: 18-86)
- 78% identified as gay, 16% as bisexual
- 73% reported a white racial identity
- 52% were single
- 55% resided in Vancouver, BC (urban centre)

Figure 2: GCO awareness and use

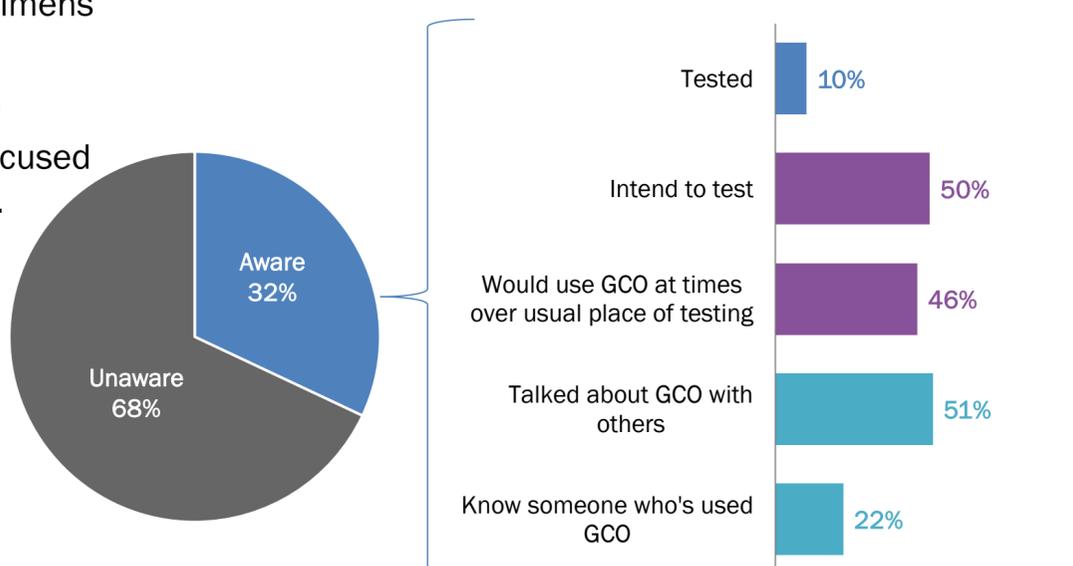


Table: Perceived benefits and drawbacks of online testing

Outcome	%
Benefits:	
Testing without waiting for an appointment at the clinic	50
Getting results online	46
Saving time	38
Drawbacks:	
Not speaking with a doctor or nurse	39
Not understanding how service works	26
Worried about privacy of one's online information	20

Figure 1: Survey recruitment



Online HIV and STI testing...
Love it? Hate it? Never heard of it?
The BC Centre for Disease Control wants your feedback.

CONCLUSIONS:

- Reach:** Two years after GCO's launch, 1/3 of GBMSM are aware of the service (of whom 1/10 have used it).
- Acceptability:** Half of those aware intend to use GCO.
- Diffusion:** An additional 51% of those aware of GCO have talked about the service, while 22% know someone who has used it, indicating substantial observability—a theoretical factor thought to induce ongoing diffusion of new technologies (Berwick, JAMA 2003).
- Overall, these findings highlight the importance of ongoing promotion to raise awareness of this testing alternative for GBMSM.

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