

# Attitudes towards HIV testing in pregnant and non-pregnant women

Sashia Malone, MD, Susan Greene, MD



## Background

- According to the CDC, an estimated 1.2 million people in the US have HIV. In 2018, Georgia had the highest rate of HIV diagnosis, 28.5 per 100,000.
- For people with undiagnosed HIV, testing is the first step in maintaining a healthy life and preventing HIV transmission
- CDC guidelines recommend everyone between the ages of 13 and 64 get tested for HIV at least once, or sooner in presence of risk factors
- HIV testing is readily available and depending on type of test, results can be known as soon as 30 minutes or less. In addition, HIV screening is covered by health insurance without co-pay, as required by the Affordable Care Act
- Despite these advances, nearly 40% of new HIV infection are transmitted by people who don't know their HIV status.
- CDC defines "HIV stigma" as a negative attitude and belief about people with HIV, including the prejudice that comes with labeling an individual as part of a group that is believed to be socially unacceptable.
- HIV stigma could have grave impacts on patient's willingness to accept testing to avoid the threatened consequences of having a diagnosis of HIV.
- Chambers et. Al emphasizes that stigma remains to be one of the biggest challenges in the social response to HIV/AIDs, marking this as the "third phase of the epidemic".

## Objective

To assess attitudes and knowledge towards HIV in order to best understand limitations to HIV testing among pregnant and non-pregnant women between ages 18- 64.

## Methods

An anonymous self-completion questionnaire was provided to women (n=61), aged 18-64, who presented to the Women's Care on Lexington Avenue resident clinic for obstetrical or gynecological care.

Patient demographics, HIV testing history, presence of risky behavior, knowledge regarding HIV prevention, attitudes towards HIV testing, and stigma regarding people diagnosed with HIV were obtained.

This study has been approved by IRB (#2017.02.03)

## Results

### Section I: Demographics

Age	HIV Tested	HIV Not Tested
18-29	8	10
30-39	12	7
40-49	9	6
50-59	7	2

## Results

### Section I: Demographics

Race	HIV Tested	HIV Not Tested
White	16	9
Black	15	10
Hispanic	5	5

Education	HIV Tested	HIV Not Tested
Middle School	2	0
High school	16	17
Undergraduate	10	7
Graduate	8	1

### Section II: HIV Testing History

61 total respondents  
 59% have been tested  
 Of those tested, 41% tested within last year

### Section III: Presence of Risky Behavior

	HIV Tested		HIV Not Tested		
	Y	N	Y	N	
Currently Sexually active	25	11	19	6	6
Consistent condom use	10	26	9	16	16
> 1 sexual partner	8	28	6	19	19
History of STI	12	24	5	20	20
History of drug use	0	36	0	25	25
Exchanged sex for money	1	35	0	25	25
Sex with HIV positive person	0	36	0	25	25

### Section IV: Knowledge regarding HIV transmission/prevention

- Can you get HIV from sharing drinks or food?
- Can you get HIV from sharing needles?
- Can women get HIV from men?
- Can men give HIV to women?
- Can you get HIV from kissing?
- Can you get HIV from vaginal sex
- Can you get HIV from anal sex
- Can you get HIV from oral sex
- Can HIV be transmitted from a mother to her baby?
- Can condoms prevent HIV?
- Can HIV be cured?
- Can birth control pills prevent HIV?
- Can HIV be prevented after an exposure?
- Can vaccination prevent HIV?

Overall Score (percent correct)	
HIV Tested	86.40%
HIV Not Tested	76.64%

## Results

### Section V: Stigma Regarding HIV

100% of respondents reported they want to know their HIV status. No stigma surrounding HIV was identified in either group.

## Discussion

- Results show that 41% of patient had never been tested for HIV, despite the presence of at least one behavioral risk factor that placed them at risk for HIV
- Both groups displayed high rates of risky behavior including inconsistent condom use and history of STIs.
- Those who were tested for HIV had an overall higher knowledge score compared to those who have not been tested. However, both groups score > 70%.
- Patients did not express stigma towards the diagnosis of HIV or patients who have HIV.
- This study is limited given nature of convenience study and sample size. However, this study shows an important opportunity to improve HIV testing among patients with high-risk behavior and improve knowledge of HIV overall.

## Conclusion

Patients want to know their HIV status. Efforts can be made from the provider to improve HIV testing rates by educating and recommending HIV testing to indicated patients.

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