

Preferred HIV testing settings and characteristics among attendees to Madrid Gay Pride, 2011-2012

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INTRODUCTION

With the objective of facilitating access to HIV testing for most at risk populations, in recent years, innovative diagnostic strategies based mainly on rapid tests have been incorporated. Most of these initiatives have offered rapid testing in non-clinical settings. As a result of this expansion, there is a co-existence of different testing approaches aimed at promoting earlier diagnosis.

In this context of multiple HIV testing strategies, we identify the preferred option for HIV testing and the most valued program characteristics with the objective of making HIV testing more appealing.

METHODS

We analyzed data on 2564 attendants to Madrid Gay Pride 2011 and 2012 who completed a self-administered anonymous questionnaire and whose serostatus is negative or unknown. Participants were asked to select their preferred testing site (out of a list of six) and to rate on a Likert scale the importance given to five characteristics that might facilitate taking the test (0=Not at all important-5=Very important).

A descriptive analysis of socio-demographic, behavioral and HIV testing related variables was performed stratifying the sample into: men who have sex with men (MSM), men who have sex exclusively with women (MSW) and women.

Chi-square test was used to assess the associations between preferred HIV testing settings and the main descriptive variables

RESULTS

Table 1. Sociodemographic and behavioral characteristics in attendants to the Madrid Gay Pride (2011-2012)

	MSM (N=1345) %	MSW (N=501) %	Women (N=718) %	Total (N=2564) %
Sociodemographic				
Under 30 years of age	48,0	56,5	65,5	54,5
Place of birth				
Spain	74,5	82,4	81,6	78,0
Latin America	17,2	12,0	11,8	14,7
Other countries	6,5	4,4	5,2	5,7
Educational level				
Primary Education	10,9	13,4	11,6	11,6
Secondary Education	28,3	28,7	25,6	27,7
University	60,5	57,7	62,7	60,6
Main source of income				
Employment	80,8	80,4	72,4	78,4
Other sources	18,2	19,6	26,7	20,9
Behavioral				
Ever injected drugs*	4,5	4,8	2,6	4,1
Ever paid for sex*	3,9	5,8	1,0	3,4
Ever been paid for sex*	4,2	2,4	1,3	3,0
≥2 sexual partner and inconsistent condom use^{†,††}	30,6	34,1	24,7	29,6
Reported STI*	43,3	9,3	16,5	29,1
Previous HIV testing				
Never tested	21,1	69,3	61,1	41,7
Tested 1 year ago or less	40,0	7,0	11,0	25,4
Tested over 1 year ago	26,6	14,6	14,6	20,9
Intention to take the test (next 12 months)	58,7	15,4	18,7	39,0

*Lifetime.

†Last 12 months.

††Anal intercourse when referring to MSM; anal/vaginal intercourse when referring to women and MSW.

MSM: men who have sex with men; MSW: men who have sex only with women; STI: sexually transmitted infection; NGO: Non-governmental organization.

** p<0,05; ***p<0,01

Table 2. Preferred HIV testing setting in attendants to the Madrid Gay Pride, by sociodemographic and behavioral characteristics (2011-2012)

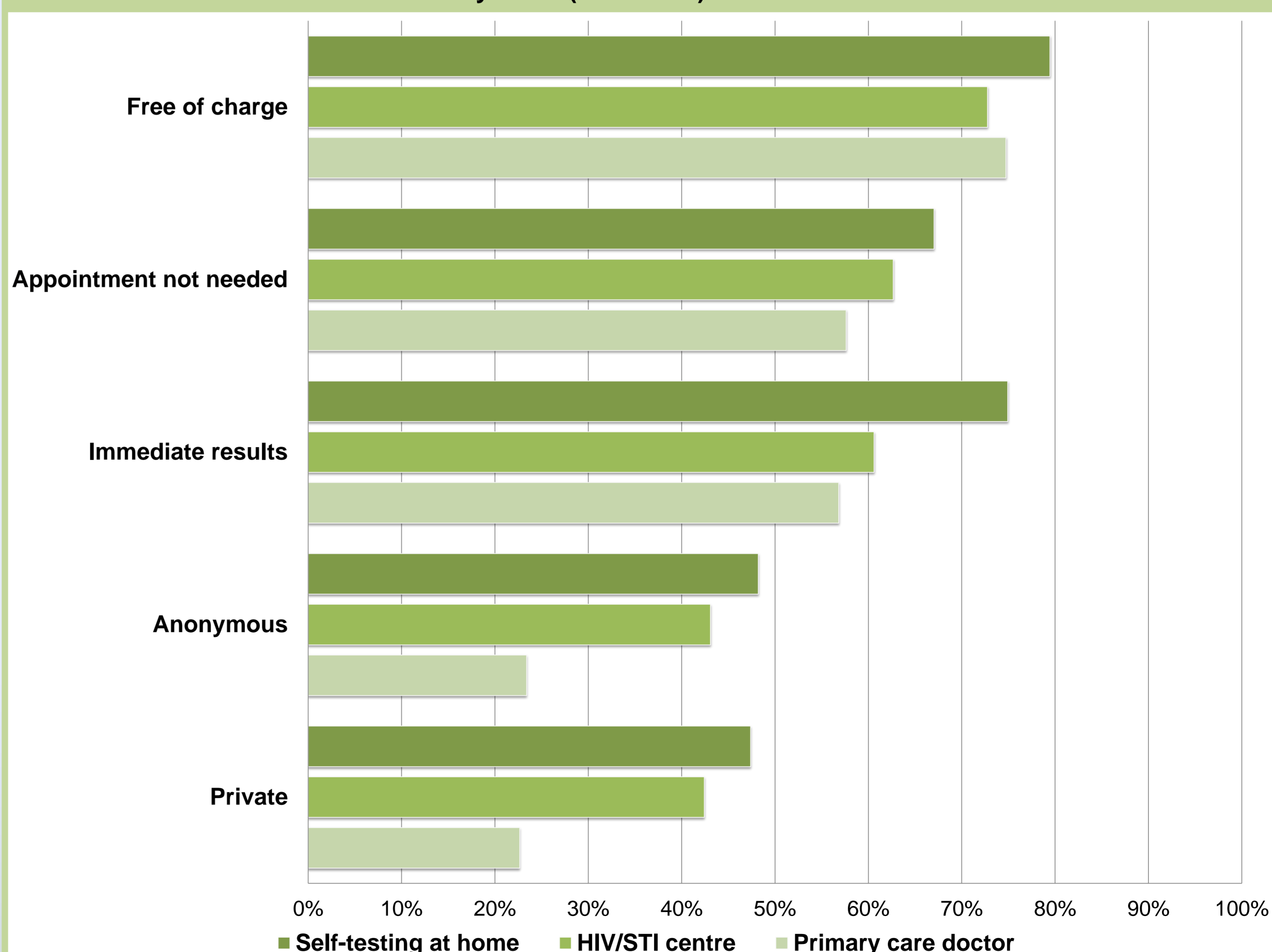
	Total N	Primary care doctor %	HIV/STI centre %	Self-testing at home %	NGOs %	Pharmacy %	Hospital emergency department %	p
Total	2137	42,4	30,0	17,7	5,1	2,9	2,0	
Sociodemographic								
Age								
Under 30	1160	44,7	30,5	15,4	4,2	2,5	2,7	**
30 years or older	967	39,4	29,7	20,4	6,1	3,3	1,1	
Place of birth								
Spain and other developed countries	1789	42,6	31,3	16,9	4,4	2,9	2,0	**
Latin America and other developing countries	313	42,5	22,7	22,4	8,3	2,6	1,6	
Educational level								
Under University Education	844	46,4	26,1	17,3	4,9	2,6	2,7	**
University	1289	39,8	32,5	18,0	5,2	3,0	1,5	
Behavioral								
Gender/sexual behaviour								
MSM	1113	34,6	35,7	19,1	6,0	3,1	1,5	***
MSW	443	49,4	23,0	17,2	4,1	4,3	2,0	
Women	581	52,0	24,6	15,3	4,0	1,4	2,8	
Reported STI*								
Yes	599	35,7	36,6	18,5	6,7	1,3	1,2	***
No	1516	45,2	27,6	17,0	4,5	3,5	2,3	
Previous HIV testing								
Yes	1207	40,0	32,6	17,5	6,4	2,1	1,5	***
No	890	45,5	27,1	17,4	3,4	3,9	2,7	
Intention to take the test (next 12 months)								
Yes	802	39,2	33,5	16,7	6,0	2,7	1,9	**
No	1318	44,5	27,8	18,3	4,4	3,0	2,0	

Table 3. Ratings given to HIV testing program characteristics by attendants to Madrid Gay Pride (2011-2012)

	Free of charge (N=2475) ^a %	Appointment not needed (N=2470) ^a %	Immediate results (N=2496) ^a %	Anonymous (no identification required) (N=2456) ^a %	Private (no one knows me) (N=2470) ^a %
0=Not at all	2,3	3,4	3,6	14,3	13,1
1	1,7	1,9	3,0	8,2	7,1
2	2,3	4,6	4,7	10,2	11,1
3	8,5	10,8	12,0	18,9	19,3
4	10,2	17,5	15,1	13,9	15,4
5=Strongly/Very	74,9	61,7	61,5	34,5	34,1

^aNumber of persons who answered each item.

Figure 1. Program characteristics rated as "very important" according to the preferred HIV testing service in attendants to the Madrid Gay Pride (2011-2012)



CONCLUSIONS

Traditional services are the most valued settings to test for HIV among attendees of the Madrid Gay Pride. Heterosexual men and women most preferred setting was primary care doctor followed by HIV/STI centres. However, both services are equally preferred by MSM. One in four participants would prefer to get tested outside formal health facilities. Self-testing at home is well ahead of other alternatives such as NGOs or pharmacies. The most valued program characteristics were free testing, testing without the need of a previous appointment and receiving the test result immediately. On the other hand, aspects such as privacy and anonymity were considered less important, especially for those who preferred to test at primary care.

The possibility of taking rapid HIV testing at public health care services without the need of an appointment seems as an attractive option for those who have never been tested before and could promote demand and improve access for a population with high and continued risk of infection.