



# Uptake of HIV testing in a Genitourinary Medicine Clinic

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# Background

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- 77 000 people are living in the UK with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)<sup>1</sup>
- 28% of these remain undiagnosed<sup>1</sup>
- 33% of HIV diagnoses are made 'late', where CD4 count at time of diagnosis is <200cells<sup>1</sup>
- In 2006 two-thirds of patients attending for sexual health screen were tested for HIV in the UK<sup>2</sup>
- Auditable standard – HIV Test uptake should be at least 60% of those attending for STI screen by 2007<sup>2</sup>



# Method

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- Retrospective case notes review of all new patients attending Walsall Sexual Health Services in the month of September 2008
- Information recorded:
  - Demographic information
  - STI tests taken
  - HIV test uptake
  - Reasons for refusal of HIV test



# Baseline Characteristics

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- 650 patients seen in September 2008
  - Male 252 (45%)
  - Female 308 (55%)
  - Age range 16-60 years



# Results

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- HIV Test Uptake
  - Male 75%
  - Female 71%
- HIV uptake poorest in 16-25 years age group
- Women were more likely to decline HIV testing than men



## Results 2

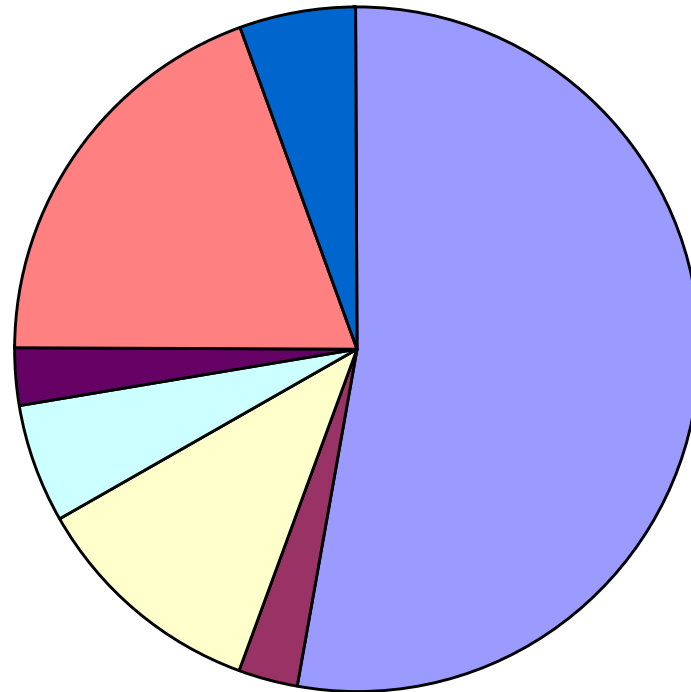
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- Reasons for Declining HIV Test
  - Window period not covered
  - Needle 'phobia'
  - Already recently tested
  - History of blood donation
  - Patient-perceived low HIV risk



# Reasons for Declining HIV Test

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-  Window
-  Low-risk
-  Phobia
-  Fainting
-  Donor
-  Recent test
-  Other



# Conclusions

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- HIV uptake poorest in females and in young persons
- Commonest reason for declining HIV test was 'window period not covered'
- Patient-perceived HIV risk may not correlate with Physician-assessment of risk



# Recommendations

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- Efforts to improve uptake of HIV test
  - Recall system for patients who have not covered window period
  - Availability of alternative methods of HIV testing, for example buccal mucosa testing kits and finger-prick point-of-care testing
  - Individualised HIV pre-test counselling for women and young persons



# References

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- <sup>1</sup>[www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk), Testing times - HIV and other STIs in the UK: 2007
- <sup>2</sup>Department of Health, The National Strategy for Sexual Health and HIV 2001