Reviewer’s report

Title: Introduction of a sexual health practice nurse is associated with increased STI testing of men who have sex with men in primary care.

Version: 2 Date: 3 June 2013

Reviewer: Kirsty Smith

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the revised manuscript. The authors have responded to the reviewer’s comments adequately and in my opinion the paper should be accepted for publication in its current form, however, I feel the following discretionary revisions would enhance the paper:

Reviewer Comment 5-Background

Would be useful to highlight the proportion of gay men attending GPs for STI screening (Gay Community Periodic Surveys and Futures Study reference) and therefore the importance of interventions being conducted in this setting.

Authors’ Response

We acknowledge the relevance of the point made by the reviewer. However, we wish to keep the length of the manuscript manageable and do not believe this additional detail is required.

Reviewer comment (2)

This information would require less than a sentence and would enable readers to understand the importance of GP clinics and the intervention in the Australian context.

Reviewer Comment-7 Discussion

Other than social marketing, are there any other external factors to be considered which may have influenced testing, such as promotion of guidelines, or initiatives undertaken by the doctors which were unrelated to the introduction of the nurse i.e. doctors grouping their pathology so all tests are automatically ordered. For example the paper by Holt et al at ASHM showed a general increase in all gay men in regards to completeness.

Authors’ Response

Holt et al (2012) analysed self-reported STI testing data from the Melbourne and Sydney Gay Community Periodic Surveys between 2003-2011. They found increases in testing for any STI and for comprehensive testing over this period. Holt et provide no detail about factors that may have driven (self-reported) increases in STI testing behaviours, nor do they differentiate where the testing occurred (i.e. general practice or sexual health clinic). We are reluctant to compare our findings with that of Holt et al because it is self-reported data and
the type of clinic men were tested in is uncertain. If we were to do this then it would be with caution and overall we believe it would not enhance the manuscript. Furthermore, the national MSM STI testing guidelines were in existence years before the study period commenced. Given the clinical focus of the intervention clinic, and that some, but not all of the, general practitioners were also sexual health physicians, then we believe there was a high awareness of the recommended testing guidelines amongst the doctors prior to the implementation of the nurse

Reviewer comment (2)
The authors could note that they believe there was a high, and possibly increasing, awareness of the recommended testing guidelines amongst the doctors prior to the implementation of the nurse.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests