Reviewer's report

Title: Trial and error: Evaluating and refining a community model of HIV testing in Australia

Version: 0 Date: 27 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Phillip Keen

Reviewer's report:

Congratulations on this evaluation of the acceptability and refinement of a model for providing peer-led community-based rapid HIV testing services to gay and bisexual men. I have a few suggestions below. This study makes an important contribution to knowledge in this field regarding the acceptability of HIV-only testing services when offered to a population accustomed to combined HIV and STI testing models. The evaluation also makes important findings in relation to the acceptability of providing HIV testing services in non-clinical spaces and services provided by peers. Specific comments on the manuscript are below.

Background section

Line 38: The BMC Health Services research guidelines for references should be followed for reference #2 and other reports and grey literature that is online. For online documents a URL and ACCESS date should be provided. The relevant part of the guidelines is:

Online document


Line 40: The reference provided (#4) I think should in fact be #6 (Cohen et al.)

Line 43: The references provided as modelling studies should be revised. only one (Wilson et al.) is a modelling study about undiagnosed HIV infections driving new HIV transmissions, whereas the other two (Pedrana et al. and Holt et al.) are studies of the prevalence of HIV infection and undiagnosed HIV infection among gay and bisexual men.

Line 44: The study cited in reference 11 (Gray et al.) found that increased HIV testing frequency would have only a 'modest' impact on reducing transmissions, although the study also found that
a reduction in testing frequency would lead to an increase in HIV transmission. The claim in the text about "...increased testing frequency likely to have a considerable impact on reducing transmission." should be revised or alternate studies cited. Consideration should also be given to providing some data from the study cited to quantify the impact of increased HIV testing.

Line 66: Regarding reference #22 (Keen et al.) a paper has now been published in a peer reviewed journal which would be a better citation than the conference presentation cited: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcv.2016.11.006

Line 71: Full-stop needed after '...exists'

Method section

Line 92: Consider adding to the text to include the incubation period, eg. 'During the 10-minute test incubation period clients remain...'

Line 125: Consider providing criteria regarding how 'high risk/not high risk' were defined in this study.

Line 133: Typo: insert 'and' before 'likeliness'

Results

Line 190: the sentence 'majority of comments (n=16) should be revised as earlier (line 187) data is provided that 35 respondents provided free text responses (so 16/35 can't be a majority).

Discussion section

Line 327-331: Some data from other studies should be provided to contextualise the results in this study.

Line 399: A reference should again be provided to the earlier study (reference #26) that reported on HIV testing frequency among men in this trial.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
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I am able to assess the statistics

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

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