

Baseline acceptability of HIV self-testing

Partner Organisation(s):

NGO Demetra

<https://www.demetra.lt>



OVERVIEW

The non-governmental organisation, Demetra, conducted a survey to understand awareness of, attitudes toward, and barriers to HIV self-testing among their clients.

This first survey of HIV self-testing acceptability in Lithuania showed good acceptability and awareness among participants.

The most common reported benefit was privacy and confidentiality.

High cost was the most common deterrent to choosing an HIV self-test.

APPROACH

01 138 participants were recruited via social media and through accessing services at Demetra.

02 Recruited participants completed a survey to understand the acceptability of HIV self-testing.

03 The survey carried out face-to-face and online in November 2019.

Country Case Study: Lithuania

HIGHLIGHTS

Most participants (86%) reported at least one HIV risk factor and 83% had tested before. A third of participants (33%) reporting a risk factor had not tested for HIV in the last year.

75%

of participants knew you could test for HIV using a self-test

74%

said they would likely buy and use HIV self-test in the future

46%

reported they would prefer a blood test, 22% a self-test, and 32% were unsure

80%

said they would trust the result; & 66% knew what steps to take if they received a reactive result

However, most people (63%) did not think a self-test would be easy to use and 67% would like contact details for organisations if they needed support.

Privacy and confidentiality (70%) were top cited benefits for using an HIV self-test in the future. A quick result was cited by 59% and convenience by 51%.

The most common cited barrier to self-testing was the price (cited by 59%). Only 15% said they were currently able to pay over 20€; and 14% would be willing to pay over 20€.

42% were concerned about performing the test incorrectly; and 36% about having nobody to discuss the result with.

LESSONS LEARNED



- The survey provided a baseline measure of acceptability of HIV self-testing in Lithuania.



- Although many people are aware of HIV self-testing, access needs to be expanded and initiatives to reduce the cost explored.



- Easy access to support during and after a test is also needed.



- These findings will inform the development of design of local testing strategies to increase awareness of and access to HIV self-testing and tailor support services for those using HIV self-tests.

