

One year after their commercialization in France, who are the MSM who are using HIV self-tests? Preliminary results from the V3T study "VIH: Teste-Toi Toi-même"

Karen Champenois¹, Vincent Coquelin², Delphine Kersaudy-Rahib³, Virginie Supervie⁴, Annie Velter³, Daniela Rojas-Castro², Jade Ghosn^{5,6}, Nathalie Lydié³, Tim Greacen¹

¹Laboratoire de recherche, EPS Maison Blanche, Paris, France; ²AIDES, Pantin, France; ³Santé publique France, Saint-Denis, France; ⁴Inserm UMR1136 Paris, France; ⁵AP-HP, UF de Thérapeutique en Immuno-Infectiologie, Hôpital Hôtel-Dieu, Paris, France; ⁶Université Paris Descartes, EA7327, Faculté de Médecine site Necker, Paris, France;



INTRODUCTION



- In France, the first HIV self-test hit the market in September 2015
 - Finger-stick blood
 - Available over the counter in pharmacies and on pharmacy websites
- Expected to increase uptake and frequency of HIV testing mainly in key populations. But does the HIV self-test reach this target?
- Objectives:** One year after its commercialization, who is interested in and has used HIV self-tests?

METHODS

- An online survey launched on 28th October 2016
- Questions on knowledge, interest and use of HIV self-tests, sexual behaviour and other HIV risks, access to health care.
- People aged ≥ 18 living in France and French overseas departments (where HIV prevalence and stigmatisation are high) informed about the study using:
 - Banners on community and dating websites
 - Banners on community Facebook pages
 - Ads in community mailing lists
 - Ads in community paper magazines
 - Flyers in community venues
 - Oral information during prevention and testing interventions of the NGOs fighting against AIDS

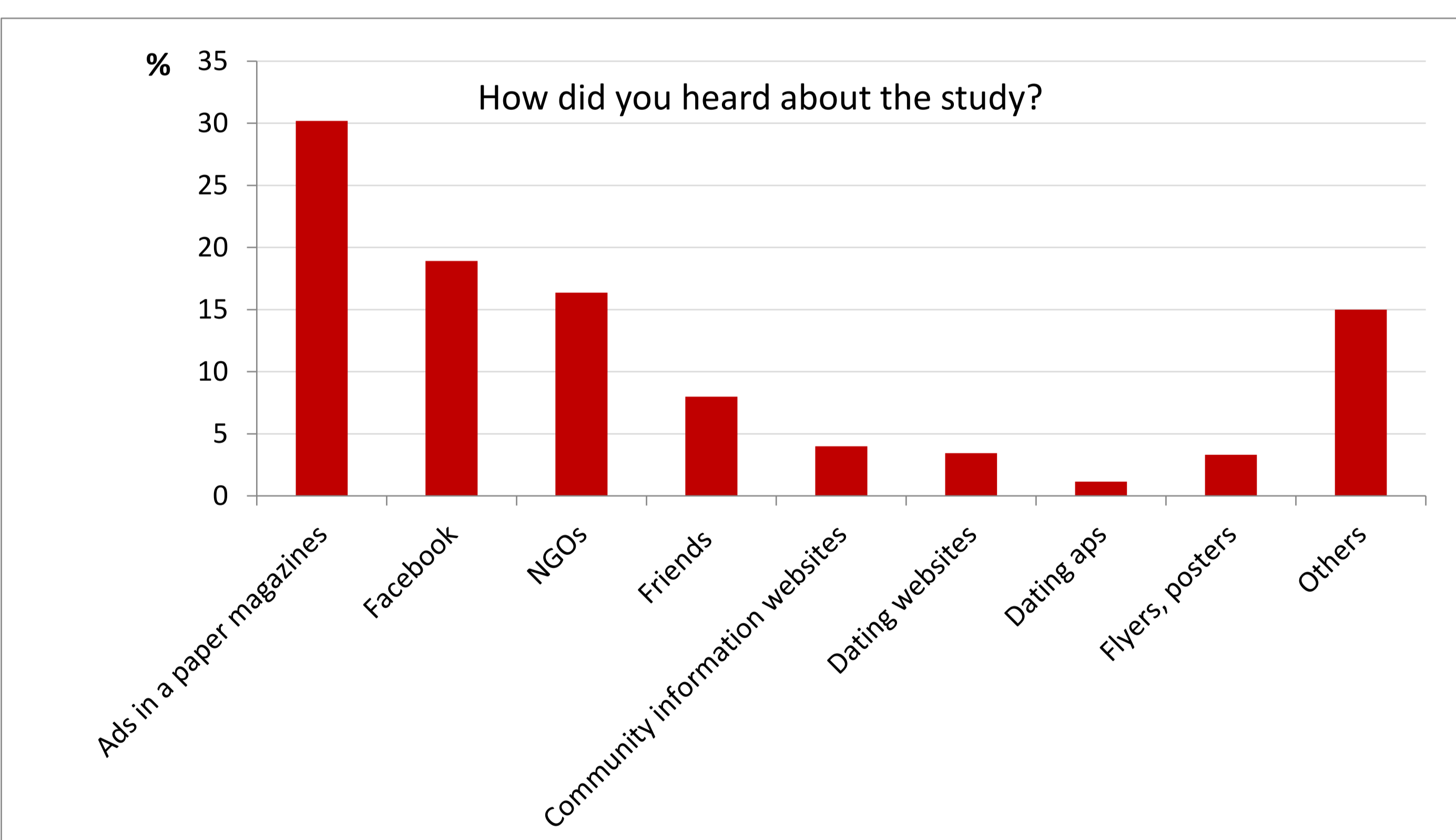


→ The current paper presents preliminary results concerning the first thousand MSM who completed the online survey.

RESULTS

Results of the communication campaign

The first thousand MSM were included within four weeks after launching the study online. The study benefited from the communication around the world AIDS day.



Participants' profile

The first thousand MSM

- Median age 32 (IQR=25-42)
- Mostly (92%) born in mainland France: (1% in French overseas departments and 7% in other countries)
- Well educated: 58% had university level education

Health data

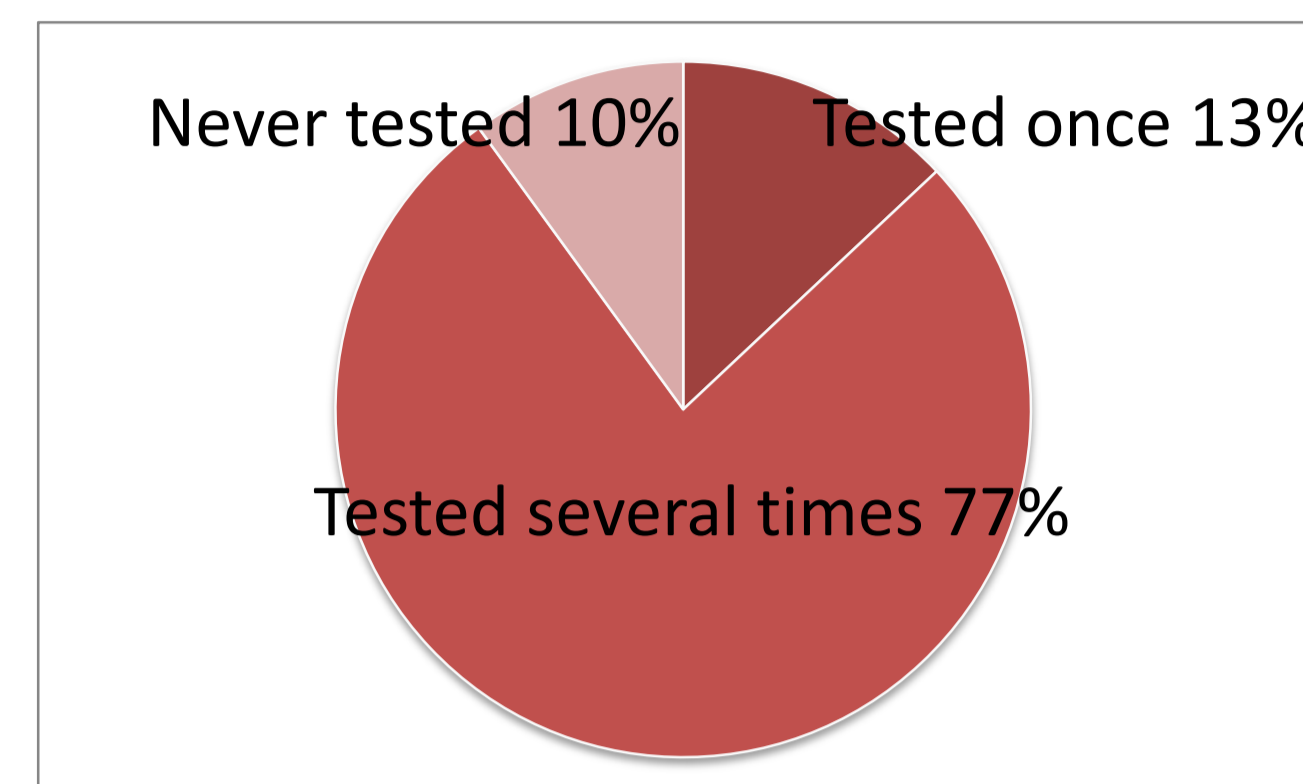
- 64% declared seeing a doctor more than once year; 17% less than once a year
- 1% (n=10) were HIV positive

Knowledge about HIV

- >80% gave correct answers concerning HIV transmission routes
- >50% knew they had to wait 6 to 12 weeks after a possible HIV exposure to be sure of a negative test result
- >50% were aware that people taking HIV treatments do not transmit HIV

RESULTS

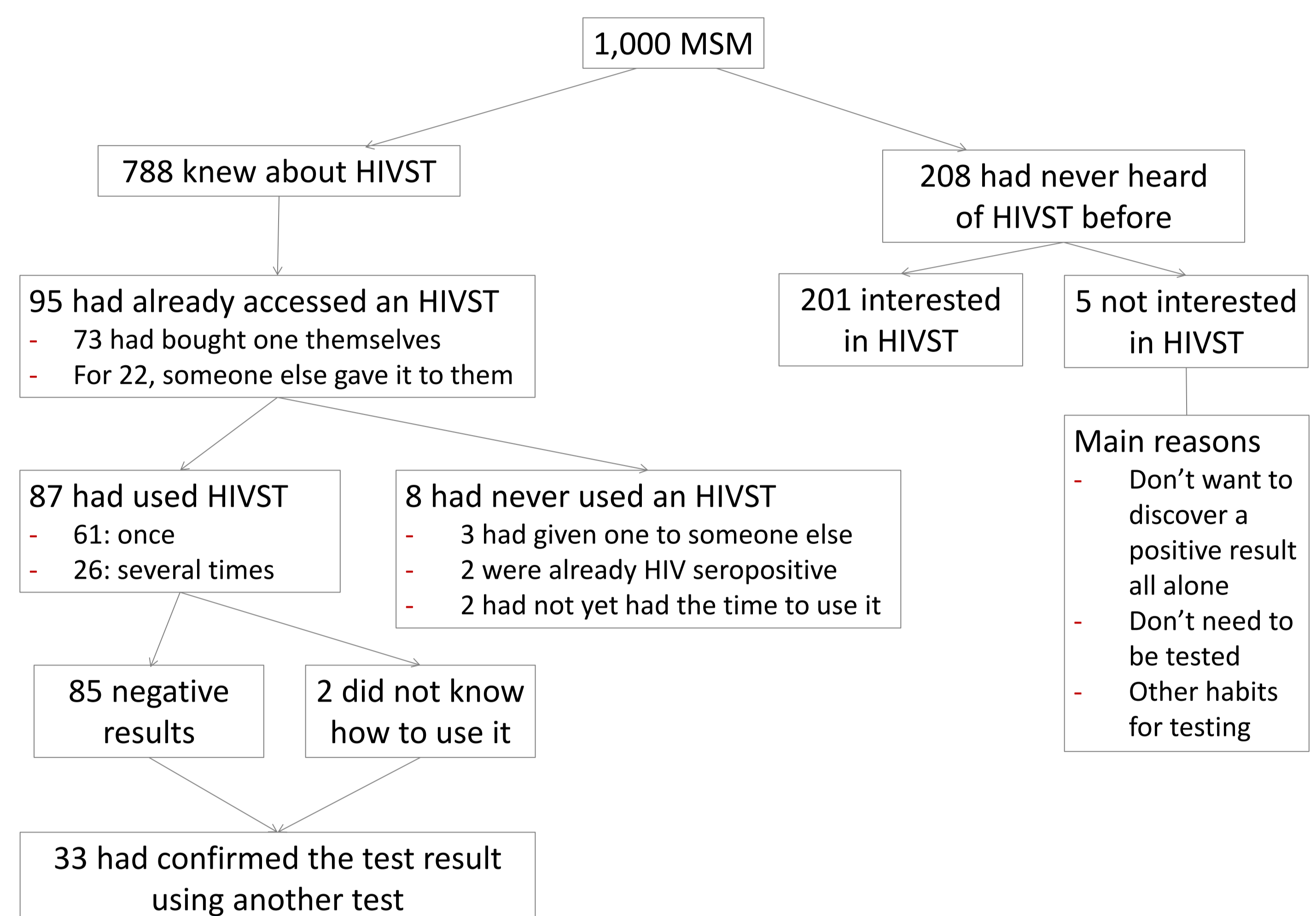
Lifetime HIV testing



Median time since last HIV test: 6.4 months (IQR=2.5-15.0)

Median number of HIV tests in the last 12 months: 1 (IQR:1-2)

Knowledge, purchase and use of HIV self-tests (HIVST) prior to the V3T study



Users were satisfied of the HIVST

- 71% planned to use it again in the future
- 89% would recommend it to a friend or family member

Sexual behaviour

- 89% defined themselves as homosexual; 9% as heterosexual
 - 5% had had sex with both men and women in the past 12 months
- 51% lived their sex lives with men openly, 42% discreetly, and 7% hidden or in the absolute secrecy
- Partners and condom use in the past 6 months
 - 541 (54%) had ≥ 1 steady partner
 - 842 (84%) had ≥ 1 casual partner
 - 85% did not use condoms consistently
 - 64% did not use condoms consistently
- Concurrent relationship
 - 74% of MSM with a steady partners declared also having casual partners
 - 54% of MSM with steady partners, thought or knew that their steady partners had others sexual partners

DISCUSSION / CONCLUSION

- Communicating via Facebook, NGOs or articles in community magazines was more effective to recruit MSM into the study than using banners on dating websites and apps.
- The first thousand MSM to participate in the survey were well-educated, had good knowledge of HIV transmission routes and took good care of their health:
 - regular visits in physicians
 - annual HIV testing
- The majority were living their homosexuality openly
- Most MSM reported inconsistent condom use with a risk of being exposed to HIV
- 79% knew of the existence of HIV self-tests before participating in the study
 - 9% had already accessed an HIV self-test
 - 92% of those who had accessed had already used it
 - Only two reported not having been able to use it correctly