

Opportunistic HIV testing in primary care



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- Laura Cousins – Salaried GP, Glodwick Medical Practice, Oldham
- My practice population is in the most deprived decile in the country
- On paper, our HIV prevalence is low – sounds good!
- But, this is measured as uptake of testing for everyone who attends GUM clinic
- My patient population's attendance at GUM clinic is only half that of the rest of GM, despite being a much younger on average practice population
- Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain what the prevalence actually is in my practice population – this is something I want to change
- Why is this important?
- Because how can we tailor healthcare to the needs of our population when we have no idea what their needs are!
- And, we cannot achieve government targets of no new HIV cases by 2030 if we don't test everyone.



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Activities so far



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- I have spoken with patients and members of the community to help ascertain the best way to roll this testing out
- We went for a simple approach – adding it into a ‘regular health check’ with plain language, factual resources and not too much discussion around awareness/doing the test for the benefit of others etc – as we felt this could attract stigma
- Then, I educated my staff about HIV including diagnosis, testing, prognosis and welcomed questions and group discussion around this
- This meant they were enthusiastic about getting our patients tested and understood why this was so important, as well as how to explain HIV testing to any patients who asked them about it
- I have started to collect data around testing and staff knowledge increase



Next steps



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- Continue to empower staff members to undertake regular HIV testing as per our new practice guideline
- Have a recap session with staff to see how they are finding it and if there have been any barriers or concerns
- Share our findings with local ED/GUM clinic/infectious disease units
- Further analyse the data to see if there are any gaps and where we can address them
- In future we can consider expanding this to include Hepatitis C testing or even rolling out the project to other practices in the local area

