

Efficacy of Outreach on Individuals Based on Prior HIV Testing and Counseling in Seeking Further Preventative Information

Background

Advances in pharmacological therapy have changed the narrative of individuals diagnosed with HIV, prolonging quality and length of life, however, prevention remains key in preventing transmission. The CDC estimates that about 20% of HIV positive individuals in the United States do not know they are infected.¹ Voluntary HIV testing and counseling is an important part of combating the under diagnosis of HIV. There are many modalities of outreach to spread awareness, and technology continues to offer emerging possibilities. There is evidence supporting web-based modules as a cost-effective mechanism for HIV/STI prevention², and informational sheets in the healthcare setting have demonstrated positive responses from patients.³ However, there is also evidence that there are limited, statistical differences in education between individuals receiving paper media versus those that receive nothing.⁴ In the case of in-person counseling versus brochures, individuals who receive counseling retain more information.⁵ Our project aims to assess how individuals obtain HIV information and testing services in the hope to better inform how resources for prevention can be effectively allocated.

Objectives

Our study aims to identify factors that influence individuals seeking information about HIV and prevention information via paper media and web-based modules. A focus group was convened to further clarify the web-based component findings.

- **Objective 1: Factors in seeking information**
 - Demographic information
 - Prior testing history
 - Efficacy of a passively available flyer in both a general information area of a health clinic vs. an area where HIV testing is taking place
 - Efficacy of directed information (eg. physician, healthcare worker, etc. specifically introducing patient or client to information on HIV)
- **Objective 2: Modality of Information Comparison**
 - Web-based module
 - Paper media
- **Objective 3: Stages of information Retrieval**
 - Picking up flier
 - Visiting web module listed on flyer
 - Seeking information about testing locations

Materials & Methods

- Study conducted in two clinics; Affirmations, Ferndale, MI and American Indian Health Family Services (AIFHS), Detroit, MI.
- Flyers placed in separate areas of clinic; general waiting area and HIV testing area.
- Flyers contained unique web links that differentiated the two areas but directed patients to the same website.
- Web site created in Softchalk module contained general information about HIV and risk, and an anonymous survey asking demographical, prior testing experience and perceived risk questions.
- Module linked to Weebly site that offered local HIV resources information that allowed site navigation to be tracked.
- Focus group convened comprised of young adults pursuing medical careers.

Layout of Study

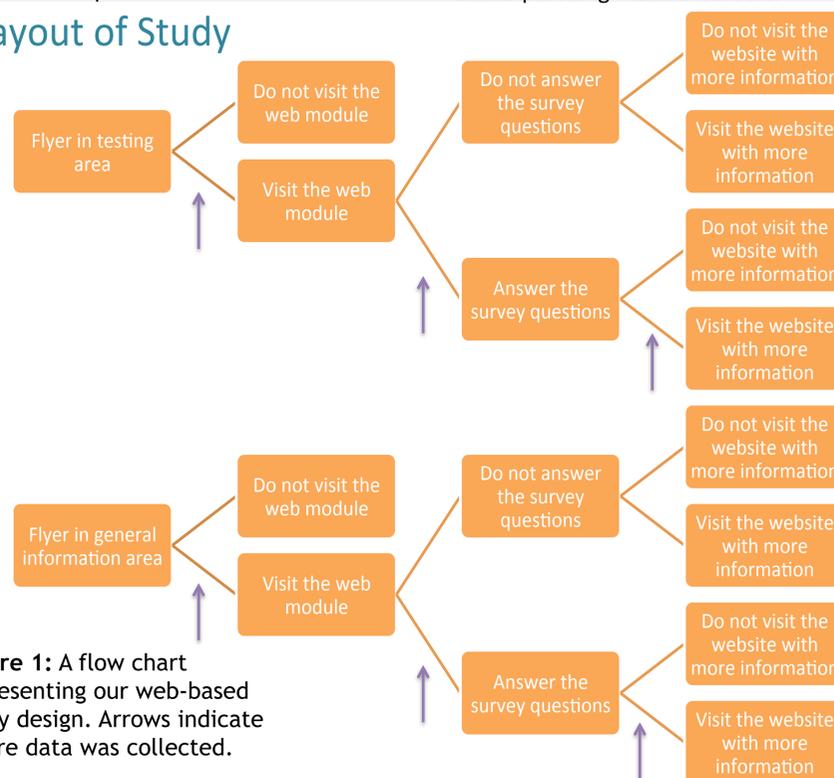


Figure 1: A flow chart representing our web-based study design. Arrows indicate where data was collected.

	Male	Female
Caucasian	5	9
African-American		1
Other		2
Totals	5	12

Table 1: Demographics of focus group participants recruited from OU Pre-med Society.

Results

Flyers

	General Area	Testing Area
Affirmations Clinic	0	85
AIFHS	36	0

Table 2: Number of flyers picked up by clinic and location.

Focus Group Themes

- Faith in healthcare provider to direct individual to appropriate testing as needed
- Internet searching for health information
- Learn about HIV
 - Microbiology class, Physician, Random brochures, Media/Educational Media
 - Belief that an individual won't learn about HIV unless it affects you personally
 - Belief that education of HIV and STIs need to be started earlier in schools
- Interaction with paper media
 - Unlikely unless bored or waiting
 - More likely to look at posters than brochures
 - More likely to look at brochures if given via direct contact with another person
- Getting tested
 - If physician says so
 - If easy and accessible
 - Peer-pressure
- Desired information on Flyer
 - What HIV is in general
 - Symptoms of HIV
 - Current updates on HIV research

Weblink Activity

	Softchalk Module	Weebly Website
General Waiting Area	4	0
HIV Testing Area	11	0

Table 3: Number of visits from flyers to web components. *3 unique visitors to Weebly site per week since August 2015 not referred by flyers.

Conclusions

Survey & Web Traffic

- Individuals seeking information about HIV appear to prefer to take initiative with their own web searches or approach their healthcare provider, themes which both arose in the focus group. This was corroborated by the focus group data.

Focus Group

- There is value in directed health information and healthcare providers have a strong role on individuals seeking prevention and testing services
- Individuals do not necessarily interact with paper media
- Factors such as flyer design may play a role in interest of clients
- Involvement of another person in the process of information discovery or testing was paramount

References

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