

Screening for HIV in a Residency Practice

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Background

The number of cases of HIV is rising. This may be due to lack of knowledge about the risks for transmission or to fear for getting tested with a fear of identity disclosure. The state of South Carolina only offers confidential testing. The purpose of this survey is to assess patients' knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about HIV testing.

Method

A survey was distributed to adult patients at a community-based residency clinic. This survey included questions about preference for HIV testing, presence of any risk factors for HIV transmission and the patients' understanding of risk factors.

Results

To date, 22 participants have returned the survey. Participants were more likely to be female (72 %) and Caucasian (73%). Of the respondents, 2 (9%) lacked knowledge about HIV transmission, 4 (18 %) preferred anonymous testing, 7 (32 %) selected confidential testing and 11 (50 %) had no preference. Eleven patients (55 %) had confidential HIV testing, 1 (5%) had anonymous HIV testing and 8 (40%) had no HIV test done in the past year.

Conclusion

Most patients in a community-based residency clinic do not know their HIV status. Future efforts assessing the use of anonymous testing and educating patients about HIV may change this.