

News update on SELPHI...

After well over two years of in-depth work, the SELPHI study reaches its final stages. However, lots of useful data about self-testing is still being recorded. All of this information comes from your completed surveys.

This survey information continues to let us know how, when and why people get tested for HIV. It also tells us quite a bit about why people may not get tested.

SELPHI study top-line statistics so far...

9,462 participants in active follow-up

19,649 surveys completed

15,742 self-test kits sent out

Average number of surveys
sent per participant: **3**

Average number of surveys completed: **3**

Timetable for the remainder of the SELPHI study

December 2019	➡	Final surveys sent out
January 2020	➡	Data analysis begins
February 2020	➡	Results meeting for participants
March 2020	➡	First results presented at conferences
May 2020	➡	First results published in medical journal

SELPHI results meeting in 2020

Interested in hearing about the SELPHI results in person?

The SELPHI study team will be organising a study results meeting in February where you can hear the results of the SELPHI study first-hand!

The meeting will be London-based, and places will be limited. To register your interest, please send an e-mail to the SELPHI team e-mail address under 'Get in touch with us!'

Get in touch with us!

What do you think of our work so far? Please contact us with your thoughts and suggestions:

Email: mrcctu.selphi@ucl.ac.uk

Website: <http://www.selphi.org/contact>

The study is being delivered in partnership with community representatives. You can find out more information on who they are on our website.

Self-testing around the world

Africa

The HIV Self-Testing Africa (STAR) initiative is the world's largest study of HIV self-testing. By the time the programme ends next year, five million HIV self-testing kits will have been provided in six countries in southern Africa: Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Eswatini and South Africa.

The research is aiming to create a market for self-testing and work out the best way for the kits to be provided. Various delivery modes have been tried: vending machines, over-the-counter sales at pharmacies, distribution by staff at clinics and distribution by community outreach workers.

Sometimes people are given extra self-testing kits to offer to their sexual partners or friends. In some places, people are shown how to use the kits by a worker who is then on-hand to help them do the test.

Brazil

Brazil is a self-testing pioneer in Latin America. Four different tests are manufactured in the country and have been approved for sale there.

There are a range of programmes to make them available to people at risk of HIV in Brazil. This includes asking PrEP users to pass test kits on to sexual partners or friends, making tests available online, and handing them out at gay bars and community events.

As well as being available for sale in pharmacies, Brazilians can now pick up a self-testing kit at primary healthcare clinics (equivalent to a GP surgery in the UK) throughout the country.

Europe

A 2017 survey of close to 128,000 gay and bisexual men living across Europe found that only 2% of men had taken their last HIV test using a self-testing kit. In the European Union, this figure was highest in the United Kingdom (5.3%), France (4.2%) and the Czech Republic (3.8%). In eight countries, fewer than 0.5% had used a self-test.

In the last few years, several European countries have lifted laws and regulations which previously banned the sale and use of HIV self-tests. They are now available for sale in pharmacies in countries such as Austria, Belgium, Germany and Spain. In France, Ireland, Italy and the UK, you can also buy tests online.

China

Some innovative pilot projects have been launched in China, including using crowdsourcing to design more relevant HIV testing campaigns and services. When gay and bisexual men using social media platforms were invited to suggest ideas, one of the two projects that was developed was to launch a self-testing platform on WeChat, a messaging and social media app that is used by over a billion people. Users could ask for a test to be sent in the mail and also received images and stories promoting HIV testing. Rolling out the crowdsourced intervention led to more people using self-testing kits.

Australia

Three years ago, Australian researchers reported that when they provided free HIV self-test kits to gay and bisexual men, men self-reported that they tested twice as often. Among those who had gone more than two years without an HIV test or who had never had a test, there was a nearly four-fold increase in testing. Encouragingly, there was no reduction in the number of men testing in clinics and no decline in testing for other sexually transmitted infections.

But it was only in April this year that a self-testing kit went on sale in Australia. It took some time for the device to get through the approval process at the Australian regulatory agency responsible for medicines and medical devices. It's now available for sale online.