

HIV testing in primary care – what African people think

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Overview



- Primary care
- Research methodology
- Barriers to HIV testing
- The role of primary care

Primary care



- Primary care and the NHS
- Africans and primary care
- Testing patterns
- Historical context
- Missed opportunities

Methodology



- In-depth interviews
- Migrant African men and women
 - HIV tested +ve
 - HIV tested –ve
 - Not HIV tested
- Digitally recorded and transcribed
- ATLAS.ti for data handling
- Analysis
 - Bottom up
 - Constant comparison
 - Iterative

Decision-making about HIV testing

Key themes



- Competing priorities
- The ongoing influence of Africa
- Fear of disease and of others
- Perception of risk
- The role of primary care in HIV testing

Barriers to testing



1. Life is complex and priorities compete

I was just concentrating on my job, I was concentrating on sending money back home, with my day-to-day life. I wouldn't have gone to be honest.

Zimbabwean female, HIV positive

Barriers to testing

2. Fear of disease



So if you're told you're HIV you know, the next thing you're waiting for, you're waiting to die. You're just a moving grave.

Zimbabwean female, HIV positive

Barriers to testing



2. Fear of others

People won't touch you; they don't want to touch you with a long spoon. No, they won't want to touch you with a long spoon man (pause 7 seconds). That's a fact.

Nigerian male, HIV status unknown

Barriers to testing



3. The ongoing influence of Africa

Now I can tell that that was AIDS because she was so skinny. She was just bones... they took her on like a wagon with donkeys and whatever, going with her to clinic. She couldn't walk, she couldn't do anything... it's like every time I think of her my heart sinks.

Zimbabwean female, HIV positive

Barriers to testing



3. The ongoing influence of Africa

I never knew there was treatment ... I believed that once you've got AIDS then you just wait to die, or they give you painkillers or whatever... maybe 90% don't know there is treatment... [my girlfriend] no, her sister, no, her friend of her sister, no. They don't know there's a treatment that can slow it down no, no, no it's a definite no! There might be some African people who know but there's not a lot.

South African male, HIV status unknown

Barriers to testing



4. Perception of risk

At that time I wanted to consider to have an HIV test, I just think to myself "Oh, what for?" Because I just say to myself "I am healthy." I just said, "It's not important." If you're walking and you're looking healthy; your weight seems fine, nice complexion.... (laughing). At least you can do this and that; very active. So there wasn't any reason for you to think you're positive but...

Zimbabwean female, HIV positive

Barriers to testing



4. Perception of risk

It's something you know is sexually transmitted, then if you know yourself I haven't been sleeping around I'd tell even my friends if we were sort of like talking things I'd say, "If HIV is coming from heaven, then I'll be having it but if it's not from heaven, then that's not for me."

Zimbabwean female, HIV positive

Overcoming barriers: The role of the GP



Overcoming barriers: The role of the GP



Provide impetus

Maybe if you start to offer them... because there are people who need a push, people who need to be reminded that this is important .

Zimbabwean female, HIV negative

Overcoming barriers: The role of the GP



Explain the benefits

Maybe if you said to me, “ Oh A, are you prepared to have an HIV test because there are advantages A, B, C, D, E.” I would definitely have gone for the test.

Zimbabwean female, HIV positive

Overcoming barriers: The role of the GP



Targeted testing

- Voluntary
- Explain higher risk (non judgemental)
- Good communication

Overcoming barriers: The role of the GP



Targeted testing

I think if a GP explain to someone, ‘There is a problem In your country, in Africa, of this disease, why don’t you think about it? It’s not that I’m forcing you but why don’t you consider having a test because that will save your life.’

Zimbabwean female, HIV positive

Overcoming barriers: The role of the GP



Targeted testing

Yeah, I wouldn't even hesitate ...I wouldn't look at it [as racist] because if anything, it's concern and I'd know my status.

Zambian male, HIV status unknown

Overcoming barriers: The role of the GP



Targeted testing

To me, I don't find it offensive. It's just like the sickle cell anaemia. Like I say, people from Africa, you are more prone to have it because of where you came from. So I'm not offended by that.

Zimbabwean female, HIV positive

Overcoming barriers: The role of the GP



Targeted testing

Some doctors when they're talking to you they're like serious, they look straight into your eyes, like what Chris Tarrant does on 'Who wants to be a millionaire?' and if the doctor said it in such a way I would definitely say no, but if they say it in a more relaxed way ... the way it is said is really to me really important.

Zimbabwean female, HIV positive

Overcoming barriers: The role of the GP



Attitude to primary care

... it's like now I know my GP, she knows me, we can talk, I can talk anything I want. I have got that confidence in my GP.

Zimbabwean male HIV positive

Overcoming barriers: The role of the GP



New patient registration

Overcoming barriers: The role of the GP



New patient registration

When you go and register with a GP, it's like they will test you for sugar diabetes, like taking your urine sample, if you could also ask, as a GP it's like "I've got to know your status, like, I'm checking for your diabetes in you, I might as well check for AIDS" ... there's no way I could have said "No I don't want it" so if by then I was tested that could have been one year, eight months earlier than now.

Zimbabwean male, HIV status unknown

Summary and some implications



- Primary care has good reach into African communities
- Offering the test provides impetus
- Targeted voluntary testing is acceptable
- Good communication and explanation is vital
- The new patient consultation provides a prime opportunity
- Need for GP awareness and training
- Care pathways are vital
- QOF

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