

Use of HIV testing venues associates with risk of infection

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Background

The Department of Health received reports of HIV infection from doctors and laboratories in private and public settings since 1984. Patterns of reporting source may indicate testing behaviours of different risk groups and inform on service needs.

Method

Voluntary HIV reports received between 1984 and June 2004 were analyzed according to source (public hospitals/laboratories/clinics, private hospitals/laboratories/clinics, VCT by NGO, VCT by government, government STD clinics, screening by transfusion service, drug rehabilitation service) and reported risk for infection.

Result

Among the 2384 HIV reports, 80% were sexually transmitted. Forty-three percent were received from public source, 22% private source, 16% STD clinics and 13% government VCT. Ratios of heterosexual to MSM reports are 5.5 for public source, 3.2 for government STD clinics, 1.1 for government VCT and private source (overall heterosexual to MSM ratio 2.4). Twenty-two percent of infections in injecting drug users were diagnosed at drug rehabilitation service and 60% public settings. A third of infections reported from private source were with risk undetermined.

Conclusions

HIV reports were received from a variety of public and private settings from where people of different profile accessed. Widely available HIV testing is required to capture clients exposed through different risk behaviours.

