

“Press C9 for HIV Self-Test”

Who uses HIV Self-Test Vending Machines in Auckland?

Olin German, R.¹, Anderson, A.¹, Hollingshead, B.M.¹, Leakey, C.J.¹

¹ Burnett Foundation Aotearoa rodrigo.olin@burnettfoundation.org.nz



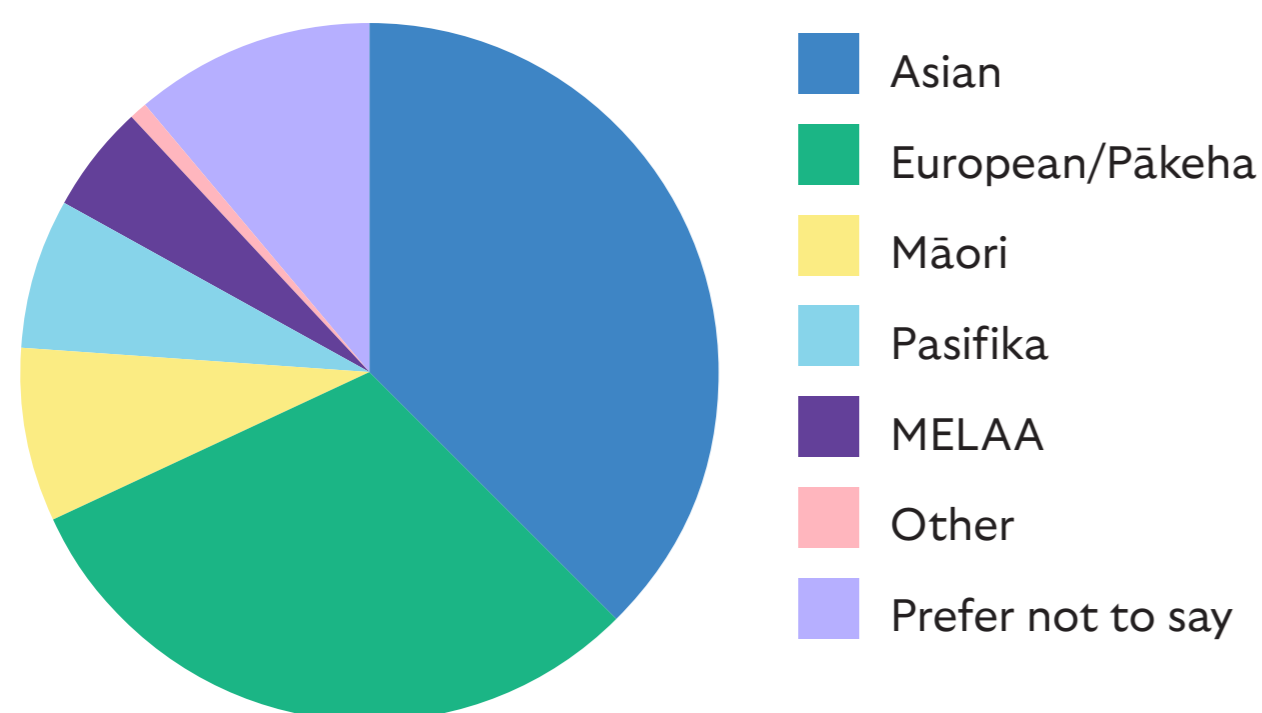
Background:

Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBM) can experience a range of barriers accessing HIV testing services. Some of these barriers are cost, accessibility, and privacy. The use and acceptability of self-testing for HIV has rapidly increased and demonstrated that some of those barriers can be addressed and successfully overcome.

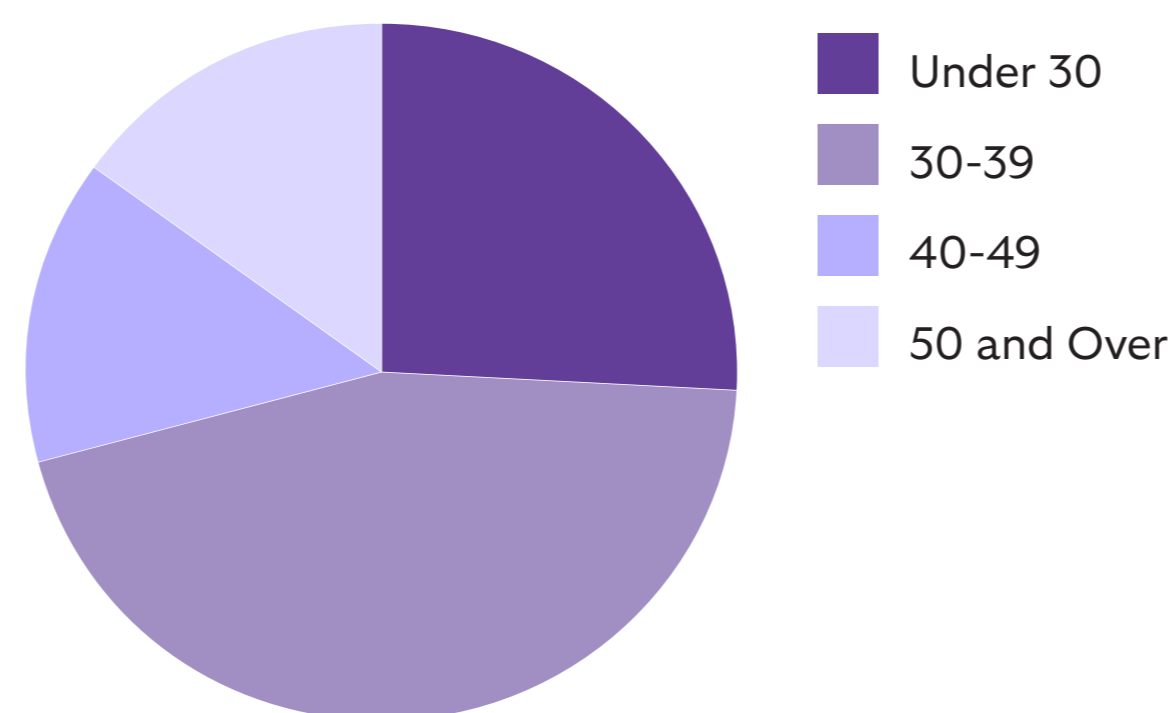
In 2019, a pilot project was implemented. This pilot comprised the installation and use of a smart vending machine in a sex on site venue to provide free HIV self-test kits. The high number of tests dispensed, and the acceptability of this service guided the expansion of this service. Additional vending machines were acquired and placed in other sex on site venues across Tāmaki Makaurau.

Users of the vending machines tap on the screen and enter a name or nickname, their ethnicity, date of birth, last time they tested for HIV and either a mobile number or an email. A verification code is sent to them instantly and once they enter it, the vending machine dispenses a self-test kit. A follow up email or SMS is sent to the client requesting to share their HIV test results and complete a post-test evaluation service.

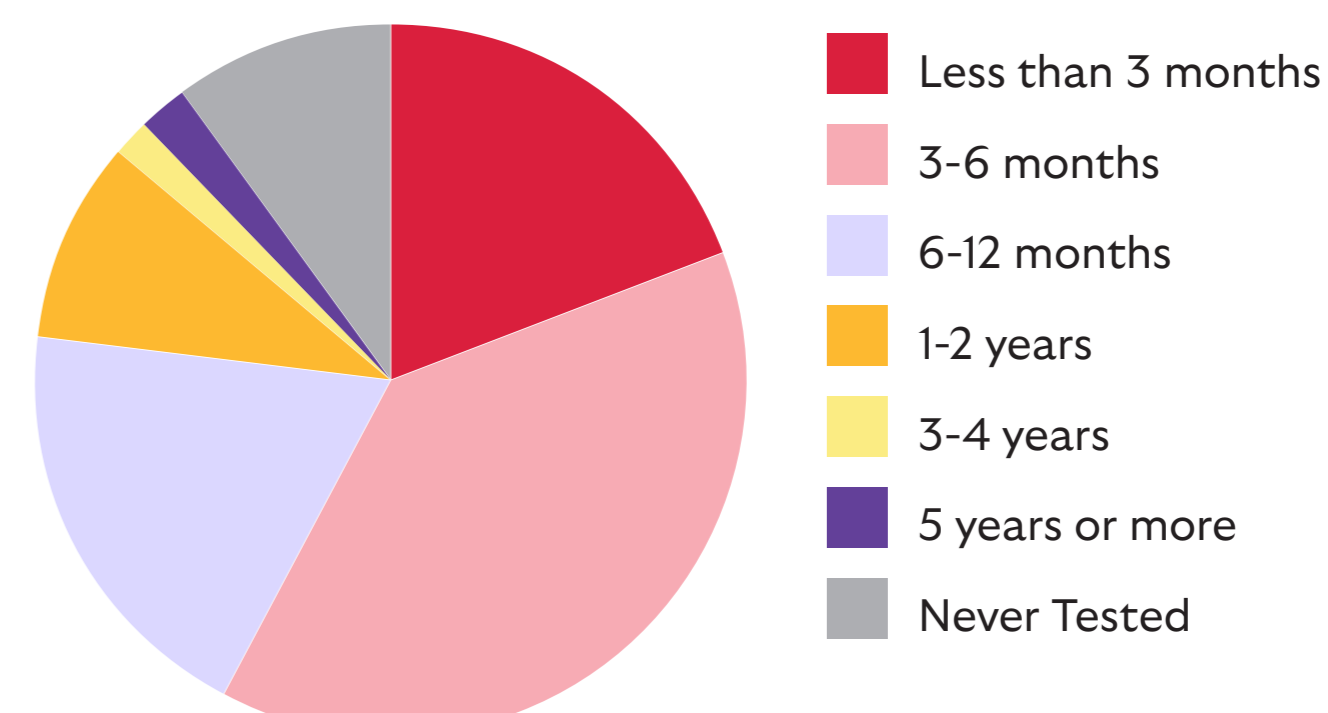
Ethnicity



Age of Vending Machine Users



Time since last test of Test User



Findings and next steps:

Since the start of the programme, 1,088 tests have been dispensed. 38% of those collecting tests were of Asian ethnicity, with 31% being European/Pākehā. Of those reporting an Asian ethnicity, the most common countries of origin were China, the Philippines, and Korea.

Most persons collecting a test were aged between 30-39, potentially reflecting the patronage of the sex on site venues. A quarter of testers were aged under 30.

Most notably, almost 10% of self-test collectors had never tested for HIV before using a self-test. Diversifying testing modalities and reaching those not engaged in regular testing is crucial to achieving the elimination of local HIV transmissions. In a previous study, sex on site venue patrons had a higher proportion of undiagnosed HIV¹. Therefore, using vending machines to increase HIV testing in this subgroup shows great potential.

An evaluation of this service is currently being carried out to identify opportunities to increase the rate of clients reporting back their results as well as to strategically place additional vending machines in other locations (e.g universities). To maximise the use of these vending machines as well as to optimise the distribution of HIV self-test kits, a process has been undertaken to set up the vending machines as collection points. Clients who order an HIV self-test kit from Burnett Foundation Aotearoa’s website, will have the option to collect their test from any of these machines.

¹ Saxton et al., 2012.