Willingness of Dental Patients to Undergo HIV Testing in the Dental Setting

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Introduction

• Dentists are potentially well situated to conduct rapid HIV testing (RHT) as they are predominantly based in the broader community, have ongoing relationships with their patients, and have the necessary training and expertise in the recognition of systemic diseases with oral manifestations (e.g. HIV/AIDS). As well, there is evidence to suggest that dentists may be willing and prepared to undertake RHT.
• However, as yet, there has been no study exploring the attitudes of dental patients willingness to accept a RHT in dental settings in Australia.

Methods

• 521 patients attending private and public dental clinics in Sydney were surveyed from November 2013 to February 2014.
• Using Decisional Conflict Theory (DCT), we explored patients’ willingness to undergo RHT in dental settings, the certainty of their decision, preference for RHT type, and their willingness to pay.
• DCT (scale: 0-4) measures uncertainty in choosing options, modifiable factors contributing to uncertainty and effective decision making, such as feeling the choice is informed.

Key Results

Are you willing to have an HIV test a dental setting?

- Yes: 14.40%
- No: 3.60%
- Unsure: 82%

How much are you willing to pay for an HIV test?

- $0: 5%
- $10: 6.90%
- $20: 8.30%
- $30: 74.90%
- $50: 15.40%

Which type of HIV test would you prefer?

- Blood test: 76.10%
- RHT (pin prick): 8.50%
- RHT (oral): 15.40%

Predictors of Willingness to Receive RHT in Dental Settings

• Service type (P < 0.001)
  - Those who go to public practices were more willing (88.0%) than those who attend private practices (59.5% willing).
• Australian born (P = 0.02)
  - Those who are Australian born were less likely (78.0% willing) than those not Australian born (86.3% willing).

Conclusions

• There was a strong willingness to undergo HIV testing in the dental setting, with a preference for the oral RHT.
• A high decisional conflict score indicates that adult dental patients are very aware of the benefits and risks associated with RHT.