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**Category: 1g. Diagnostic virology (other than hepatitis & HIV)**

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## HIV self-test: perceptions and intention to use in a French nationwide study

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**Background:** In France, an estimated 20% of people infected by HIV ignore it. Since September 2015, an instant self-test for HIV is freely available in pharmacies without medical prescription. We aimed to determine the knowledge concerning this tool in different populations and what whether they intended to use it.

**Material/methods:** An anonymous online questionnaire was circulated from December 1, 2015 to January 16, 2016. The link ([www.autotest-et-vous.com](http://www.autotest-et-vous.com)) was relayed through social media (Twitter, Facebook), an official HIV prevention site (sida-info-service), a daily general newspaper (*Le Parisien-Aujourd'hui en France*), a gay dating app (Bearwww), and gay community websites (tetu, Yagg). Cards were distributed in gay bars and baths, and in sexually transmitted disease free testing centers. The question explored 1) the age, gender, sexual orientation, and at-risk behavior, 2) the knowledge concerning HIV self-test performances, and 3) the intentions of self-test use, and perceived pros and cons.

**Results:** 1082 persons (67.0% men, 32.6% women, 0.4% defining themselves differently, mean age 31.8±12 years) answered the questionnaire, including 889 completely filled. 44.8% were HSH, 19.5% were straight male, 28.6% were straight women and 2.9% were FSF. 57.6% knew about the existence of the HIV self-test, and 9.8% had already used it. 13.5% planned to use the test in the coming months, 25.0% in the coming year, and 34.0% in the future unspecified. 74.9% thought it was a good tool, including in 63.0% a good tool for themselves; 69.0% considered it should cost less than 10 euros (actual price: 25 to 30 euros). 68.2% overestimated the performances after a risk-taking. 60.8% thought it was relevant to test a new partner before having sex. 74% of respondents reported that penetration with a partner different from their usual partner occurred; 68.1% did not use condoms systematically in this situation. Among them, 50% planned to use the self-test in the year, and 67% declared it was a good tool for them.

**Conclusions:** Three months after its availability in pharmacies, the HIV self-test is known to 57.6% of respondents; 50% of the respondents who do not systematically use a condom with a casual partner planned to use in the coming year, which is encouraging. However, errors on the conditions of use (time reliability, use as instant screening tool before having sex), are frequent; these aspects should be corrected future information campaigns. Perceived as too high, the cost could be a hindrance.