

## **ORAL PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS**

## **NOVEL HIV TESTING DURING HEALTH PROMOTION OUTREACH: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF FIELD NOTES BY PEER-TESTERS**

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Introduction: Novel health promotion strategies are needed to improve access to HIV testing among 'harder to reach' gay and other homosexually active men in Australia, to reduce onward transmission and late diagnoses. This project trialled point of care testing (POCT) via a mobile clinic van at community locations. These findings summarise the experiences of the peer testers regarding the acceptability and feasibility of the project, and future recommendations.

Methods: Over a period of five months (2 sessions/week), POCT was trialled in a regional Queensland town by QPP RAPID trained peer testers using a mobile clinic van. Per 'action research' frameworks, peer testers were asked to complete detailed field notes for each health promotion session, including characteristics of clients attending, client feedback, impressions regarding acceptability and feasibility of the project, and other salient events, concerns or recommendations. Ethics approval was obtained.

Results: Thematic analysis (utilising two independent reviews with fidelity checks with the primary peer tester) revealed three major themes (with subthemes): 1) Practical challenges (The right 'look' and equipment, Personal safety of testers); 2) Barriers to engagement (Importance of understanding the specific community culture, Trust/anonymity, Negotiating relationship boundaries); and 3) Recruitment method/project promotion (What is working well, Areas for improvement-current project, Future recommendations-future projects).

Conclusions: Collection and analysis of field notes has provided greater context for understanding the acceptability and feasibility of this project, and supplement quantitative project data to more comprehensively inform the project evaluation and recommendations for future health promotion and research.

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