ANNUAL PUBLIC HEALTH CONFERENCE

Thursday 27 & Friday 28 October 2016
Dunblane Hydro Hotel
Exploring The Knowledge, Attitudes And Associated Behaviours Of University Students Regarding STI Testing

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WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND TO THIS RESEARCH?

• Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are a long standing public health problem particularly amongst young people.

• Whilst STIs can be easily detected with an STI test and early treatment is beneficial, rates of STI testing among young people remain low

• Understanding what complex individual, psychological and social factors influence a young person’s decision to have an STI test can help plan campaigns to target the people and determinants of STI testing that matter most.
AIMS

• Use health psychology theory and methods to explore factors influencing STI testing in the student population in the University of Aberdeen, Scotland

• In the light of findings, provide recommendations to NHS Grampian and future research.
WHAT RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED?

• An online questionnaire asked participants about their demographics, sexual activity and 6 psychological and social constructs developed from theory and past research including:
  
  – Knowledge
  – Perceived susceptibility
  – Social norms (social pressure)
  – Attitudes
  – Social fear
  – Self-efficacy (confidence)

• Analyses explored which factors influence past STI testing behaviour, past risky sexual behaviour and intentions to attend an STI test in the future.
• Additionally, the possible contribution of an **online goal setting intervention** was explored.

• Participants completing the questionnaire were asked to make an action plan, a well-evidenced behaviour change technique to help people to act on their intentions.

You’ve indicated that you intend to get a test for an STI in the next month. It can be helpful when making plans to think about when, where and how you will take action. Please use the boxes below to make a specific plan for your next steps towards getting tested. All information will be kept securely and strictly confidential and for research purposes only.

Q30  **When** will you get tested or make an appointment to get tested?  
*E.g. I will go to the drop in clinic at the health village on Friday at 12:30pm*

Q31  **Where** will you go to get tested?  
*E.g. I will go to the sexual health centre at the health village*

Q32  **How** will you get there or who or what will help you do it?  
*E.g. I will set a reminder on my phone*

The action plan simply asked participants to write down **when**, **where**, and **how** they will make an appointment to attend a test.
WHO TOOK PART IN THE SURVEY?

- 1600 participants took part, approximately 10% of the entire University of Aberdeen student population

- However 297 were excluded because they had never been sexually active and 9 were excluded due to not completing over 50% of the survey. The final data set consisted of 1294 respondents
WHO TOOK PART IN THE SURVEY?

**Gender**
- Female, 888, 69%
- Male, 401, 31%

**Age**
- 18-25, 999, 78%
- 25 or more, 282, 22%

**Number of years in UK**
- 0-5, 456
- More than 5, 838

**Year of study**
- Undergraduate, 968, 75%
- Postgraduate, 325, 25%

**Ethnicity**
- White, 88%
- Mixed Multiple, 2%
- Asian, 2%
- Black, 6%
- African, 2%
- Other, 2%
WHAT WERE THE MAIN FINDINGS

• Behaviour: what are students doing?

No. of students reporting past STI screening behaviour, intentions and sexual risk behaviour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past STI Screening</th>
<th>Intentions</th>
<th>Sexual risk behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not intend</td>
<td>1128</td>
<td>1113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT WERE THE MAIN FINDINGS

- High knowledge of STIs and STI testing
- Favourable attitudes towards STI testing
WHAT WERE THE MAIN FINDINGS

• Which students had ever been tested for an STI?
WHAT WERE THE MAIN FINDINGS

- Which students are having unprotected sex with more than one partner?

More likely to have engaged in risky sex in the past 6 months

- Feeling more susceptible to STIs
  - OR: 1.331, CI: 1.258-1.408, $p < .001$

- High social pressure to test
  - OR: 1.011, CI: 1.002-1.019, $p = .018$
WHAT WERE THE MAIN FINDINGS

- Which students intend to get an STI test in the next month?

**Feeling more susceptible to STIs**

- OR: 1.236, CI: 1.174-1.300, \( p < .001 \)

**Non-white ethnic background**

- OR: 0.425, CI: 0.246-0.735, \( p = .002 \)

**Age**

**Gender**

**Years in UK**

**Social pressure**

- OR: 1.024, CI: 1.015-1.034, \( p < .001 \)

**Knowledge**

**Confidence**

**Social fear**

**Attitudes**

- OR: 1.236, CI: 1.174-1.300, \( p < .001 \)
WHAT WERE THE MAIN FINDINGS

Can an action plan help?

Intenders 188 (145 completed action plans)

56 gave details for follow-up one month later

27 responded (42% had attended testing)
WHAT WERE THE MAIN FINDINGS

Content of plans
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NHS GRAMPIAN:

Who to target?

- Young, undergraduate, men who are not from the UK.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Strengthen positive social norms

Boost perceptions of personal risk

Continue to prioritise knowledge

Increase confidence to attend an STI test

Action planning (when, where and how)
Practical interventions

Marketing campaigns
- Campus-based media used to deliver health promotion through specific health messages

Peer led screening
- Brief (3 minute) intervention at GP or sexual health clinic
  - provided with testing kit
  - encouraged to talk to friends about testing

Role modelling
- Video message from students sharing information and experiences of attending an STI test

Social networks
- Advocates from could be recruited and trained to spread behaviour-change endorsements and recommendations to their peers through conversation.
Had a wild weekend?
Get an STI Test

Over half of the students at University of Aberdeen have been for an STI test! So can you!

All you have to do is plan

WHEN  WHERE  HOW
THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

For further information please contact holly.martin-smith@nhs.net