



Hepatitis C Self Testing: Preliminary Results and Lessons Learnt for the HIV-HCV Response in Malaysia

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Only 21% of estimated 58 million people with chronic hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection were diagnosed in 2019 with variation by regions





Percentage of hepatitis C infected persons diagnosed to end 2019

Percentage of hepatitis C infected persons treated to end 2019

Source: Global progress report on HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections, 2021



HCV SELF-TESTING WHAT IS STILL NEEDED?

WHO launched the 1st HCV self-testing (HCVST) guidelines in July 2021 – important first step to increase awareness and access to HCVST

Strong recommendation, moderate quality evidence: HCVST should be offered as an additional approach to HCV testing



https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240031128



HCV SELF-TESTING STATUS OF HCVST KITS IN THE MARKET

Currently no test certified for HCVST

- [Professional use] OraQuick® HCV rapid antibody test kit from OraSure Technologies Inc. (US) Sensitivity/Specificity 98.1%/99.6% (WHO-PQed and CE-marked)
- [Professional use] First Response® HCV Card Test from Premier Medical Corporation (India) Sensitivity/Specificity 100%/100% (CE-marked and currently under WHO PQ review)

Both OraSure and PMC have now developed, validated and adapted instructions for use (IFU) for HCVST.

Research Use Only (RUO) OraQuick® and First Response® HCV Self-Tests were used.





DND*i* Drugs for Neglected Diseases *initiative*

Randomized controlled trial of home-based hepatitis C self-testing (HCVST) for key populations in Malaysia





HCVST STUDY IN MALAYSIA ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

FIND would like to express our gratitude to all participants, collaborators and partners:



Ministry of Health Malaysia

Research team



Study implementation

Peer support with network of partner organizations



Sponsor



Web development Data protection

DNDi Drugs for Neglected Diseases *initiative*

In-country supporting partner

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STUDY METHODOLOGY



HCVST STUDY IN MALAYSIA OVERVIEW

Nationwide study



Integration with HIV self-testing

• Leverage on existing momentum of Jom-Test.com



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HCVST STUDY IN MALAYSIA STUDY METHODOLOGY



Total sample size for recruitment = 750

Intervention arm participants receive HCVST via courier service; control arm participants receive information about standard of care HCV antibody testing available at local testing sites

Self-reporting of HCVST / standard of care HCV antibody result as well as linkage to care data (confirmation, treatment) in 2 follow-up surveys

Primary objective: <u>To assess the impact of home-based HCVST on the uptake of HCV antibody testing</u>

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PRELIMINARY RESULTS



PRELIMINARY RESULTS FROM SEP 2021 - JUN 2022 RECRUITMENT PROGRESS





PRELIMINARY RESULTS FROM SEP 2021 - JUN 2022 GROUPS PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFY WITH





PRELIMINARY RESULTS FROM SEP 2021 - JUN 2022 DEMOGRAPHICS

PARAMETERS	TOTAL	BLOOD	ORAL	CONTROL		
Median age (IQR) in years	26 (23-31)	26 (22-30)	26 (23-31)	27 (23-32)		
Male	96.7%	97.2%	95.6%	97.2%		
Highest education level completed:						
University	51.5%	48.2%	55.1%	51.2%		
Post-secondary	35.8%	40.2%	35.1%	32.3%		
Secondary	12.3%	11.2%	9.8%	15.7%		
Primary	0.3%	0.4%	0.0%	0.4%		
None	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%		
Employment status:						
Employed	65.6%	66.3%	69.8%	60.9%		
Unemployed	9.3%	8.0%	8.2%	11.7%		
Student	25.1%	25.7%	22.0%	27.4%		



PRELIMINARY RESULTS FROM SEP 2021 - JUN 2022

BASELINE HCV TESTING EXPERIENCE AND HCVST ACCEPTABILITY

PARAMETERS	TOTAL	BLOOD	ORAL	CONTROL			
HCV testing experience prior to the study:							
Never tested before	58.0%	58.2%	58.0%	57.7%			
Tested in the past 6 to 12 months	12.1%	10.0%	13.1%	13.3%			
Tested more than 1 year ago	14.4%	16.1%	12.2%	14.9%			
Don't know	15.5%	15.7%	16.7%	14.1%			
Would you test yourself at home for hepatitis C if you have a testing kit and instructions?							
Yes	97.0%	97.2%	96.3%	97.6%			
No	0.9%	0.4%	2.0%	0.4%			
Don't know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%			



PRELIMINARY RESULTS FROM SEP 2021 - JUN 2022 BASELINE RISK BEHAVIOURS

PARAMETERS	TOTAL	BLOOD	ORAL	CONTROL			
In the last 6 months, have you taken any substance by snorting it?							
Yes	5.1%	2.8%	7.3%	5.2%			
No	94.9%	97.2%	92.7%	94.8%			
In the last 6 months, have you engaged in chemsex or high-fun/hi fun?							
Yes	7.7%	6.8%	8.2%	8.1%			
No	92.3%	93.2%	91.8%	91.9%			
In the last 6 months, have you injected unprescribed drugs?							
Once	0.8%	0.8%	1.2%	0.4%			
More than once	0.9%	2.0%	0.0%	0.8%			
Never	98.2%	97.2%	98.8%	98.8%			

PRELIMINARY RESULTS FROM SEP 2021 - JUN 2022 IMPACT OF SELF-TESTING ON UPTAKE OF HCV ANTIBODY TESTING

Overall LTFU 23.3% - 15.7% blood, 17.7% oral and 37.4% control

Based on responses from follow-up surveys:





PRELIMINARY RESULTS FROM SEP 2021 - JUN 2022 HCVST AND STANDARD OF CARE RESULTS



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RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES



RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES (1) PROMOTION ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND BY CBOS





(2) PROMOTION ON DATING APPS, AT PHCS & VIA DIRECT MARKETING





JOM TEST 12:00 AM to Undisclosed, bcc: me ~ <hr/>
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Dear JOM TEST users, Thank you for using jom-test.com platform to participate in the HIV Self-Testing Study.

DID YOU KNOW and besides HIV, hepatitis C can also be transmitted through unsafe sex, sharing needles and receiving blood? FIND in collaboration with the Malaysian AIDS Council currently running a pilot project for hepatitis C self-testing. You can get the Hepatitis C self-test kit* for FREE from jom-test.com. Not only that, you will be rewarded if you complete the questionnaires.

Jom test your hepatitis C status. Sign up now!



RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES (3) SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT BY KEY OPINION LEADERS



freyr @notsoaidil

I got my Hepatitis C self-test kit from

jom-test.com/join-study-hcv . You can also get yours for FREE. If you're sexually active, continuous testing is important to monitor your health.

Jom test your hepatitis C status! Sign up now by using the link above.



Malaysian AIDS Council and 2 others

2:30 PM · Apr 27, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone



Preliminary results show that:

HCV self-testing via an online distribution model, compared with standard testing services, significantly increased the uptake of HCV testing among key populations in Malaysia.

HCV self-testing can provide an additional way for people from key populations to test for HCV, including many who have been hesitant or unable to access existing services.

Increase in targeted testing can accelerate progress towards HCV elimination.

Important to evaluate resource use with governments.

Further studies can understand how HCV self-testing can also be distributed via communitybased organizations or health facilities.





THANK YOU!

