

Free HIV Testing and Rates of HIV Infection

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IMPLICATIONS TO SOCIAL WORK

- Social workers have a duty to serve their clients the best they can, and harm reduction helps protect clients
- Harm reduction practices such as free HIV testing can help clients protect themselves and identify people who may have been living undiagnosed with HIV

BACKGROUND

- 21% of people with HIV are undiagnosed (Avert, 2019)
- 1.2 million people in the US are living with HIV (CDC, 2018)
- HIV can be treated to a point of being undetectable in the blood if discovered
- Free testing can help slow the rate of transmission and help those who are unaware they are living with the virus

PURPOSE

- Determine how rates of HIV infection change over time when free testing is available to at risk populations, such as IDU and the LGBTQ+ community
- The goal of the Early Intervention Program is to hit a positivity rate of 1% of all people tested through their program

DATA ANALYSIS

- The data will be collected through a risk assessment created by the Early Intervention Program
- The data collected will be analyzed by a data analyst employed with the EIP

RESULTS

- The rate of HIV infection has gone up 0.64% since 2017
- The program tested less people but had a higher rate of identified positive cases
- In 2017, the percentage of new positive cases was 0.56% of all people tested
- In 2019, the percentage of new positive cases was 1.2% of all people tested

REFERENCES

Avert. People Who Inject Drugs, HIV and AIDS. (2019).
<https://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-social-issues/key-affected-populations/people-inject-drugs>
Center for Disease Control. HIV Basic Statistics. (2018).
<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/statistics.html>

DISCUSSION

- The positivity rate of new HIV cases has gone up, despite the EIP testing less people in 2019
- This can be due to the EIP hitting target demographics and at-risk populations such as IDU and the LGBTQ+ community, men who have sex with men

CONCLUSION

- The EIP hit its goal of a 1% positivity rate of all people tested in 2019
- Free HIV testing can help people who may not know they have HIV get diagnosed before the virus progresses further
- Further research can be done to determine how free HIV testing affects new positivity rates over a longer period of time

LIMITATIONS

- Data only from the Early Intervention Program
- The study is limited to only Cincinnati testing sites
- Study covers only two years
- Risk factors are self-reported in the needs assessment and not everyone completes an assessment