# Financial Incentives for Undetectable Viral Load Are Well Received

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A U.S. program offering $70 gift cards for each undetectable viral load test was well liked by both its HIV-positive participants and the clinic staff in a trial, aidsmap reports. Reporting qualitative interim findings at the HIV Research for Prevention conference in Cape Town, South Africa, researchers from the HPTN 065 study offered the financial incentives at 39 clinics in the Bronx, New York, and Washington, DC, between January 2011 and April 2013.

Thorough information on how effective the gift cards were at incentivizing an undetectable viral load is not yet available. Instead, the information presented at the conference focused on the results of semi-structured interviews with 75 study participants and 12 clinic staff, as well as an additional 12 staff who participated in three focus groups.

Both the participants and the staff generally regarded the program favorably. The incentives appeared to drive up appointment attendance. Also, the clinicians said they had more chances to provide preventive care. Both the staff and the participants said that relationships between the providers and their patients were improved as a result of the cards.

On the downside, the gift cards did not lead to an increased awareness among the participants as to the meaning of the viral load test results. Half of the participants interviewed misunderstood the significance of the test, mostly because they confused it with the CD4 test, thinking that a viral load should be high and that “undetectable” was bad.

To read the aidsmap story, click here.

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