Grindr Asks Users If They Want to Filter Guys by HIV Status

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Grindr, the popular social networking app for gay men, recently surveyed its users about filtering guys by HIV status, Mic reports. Specifically, two HIV-related questions were:

- "How would you feel if Grindr allowed you to filter the guys you see by HIV status?"
- "Are you open to having sexual encounters with people who are of a different HIV status than you?"

The questions in the survey were flagged by a user in Montreal who sent screenshots to Australian doctoral candidate Daniel Reeders, who posted them on his blog, in an item titled "Digital Quarantine? Grindr Considers HIV Filter."

"It is absolutely irresponsible of Grindr to help make HIV invisible to negative men," Reeders told Mic. "There's an inherent logic of exclusion that so many gay men take as normal and natural and it leads guys to put themselves at risk. The highest risk encounter you can have is with a guy who has recently been infected but still thinks and says he's negative."

A Grindr spokesperson told Mic that the company's survey questions didn't mean it was planning to allow users to filter out people with HIV. "We have observed a significant increase in user profiles openly discussing their HIV status and test dates," the spokesperson said. "Given that this has not been a part of our profile options to date, we are surveying users to determine both their desire to share this information, and ways to prevent stigma and provide proper support. Sometimes this involves asking uncomfortable questions."

The survey questions have sparked conversations across social media, as seen in posts by HIV activist Josh Robbins, whose I'm Still Josh blog includes the Grindr survey on the topic and who pointed out in a tweet that such questions on apps could be used to criminalize people for nondisclosure.

#HIVscoop: The beef against a @Grindr #HIV filter option is about potentially criminalizing users. pic.twitter.com/BwcVSivyMF

— Josh Robbins (@imstilljosh) July 13, 2016

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