



HIV Testing Rates Are Very Low Among Teen Gay and Bi Males

Researchers have called for improved communication about sexual orientation and HIV testing between pediatricians and adolescents.

February 24, 2020 By [Benjamin Ryan](#)

Adolescent males who have sex with males have a very low rate of HIV testing, according to a new study. Given this finding, the study's researchers are calling for health care providers to make a greater effort to discuss sexual orientation and HIV testing with their adolescent gay and bisexual male patients.

Brian Mustanski, PhD, of Northwestern University, and colleagues conducted a study of 699 13-to 18-year-old males ages who have had sexual experience (not necessarily sexual intercourse) with other males and evaluated the effects of HIV prevention programs. They published their findings in the journal *Pediatrics*.

Nearly half of the participants were Latino or Black.

Just 23% of the participants said they had ever been tested for HIV, including 5.6% of the 13- and 14-year-olds, 16% of the 15- and 16-year-olds and 38% of the 17- and 18-year-olds.

Reporting having ever had intercourse was associated with a 6.6-fold greater likelihood of receiving an HIV test.

Sixty-eight percent of the participants had a regular health care provider. However, only 21% of this group said they had engaged in conversations with their provider about same-sex sexual behaviors; additionally, only 19% said they had talked about HIV testing with their clinician, and 29% said they had discussed their sexual orientation with their clinician.

Having had a conversation with a health care provider about HIV testing was associated with a 25-fold greater likelihood of receiving a test. Three quarters of the participants who had had such a discussion had been tested for the virus, compared with 11% of the participants who had not had such a conversation.

"[The] data indicate pediatricians are an important, but largely untapped, source of testing and could be integral to achieving testing rates needed to end the epidemic," the study authors

concluded.

To read a press release about the study, [click here](#).

To read the study abstract, [click here](#).

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