HIV Test Counseling Fails to Lower STI Incidence

October 25, 2013

Long a mainstay of the HIV testing experience, risk-reduction counseling appears not to lower the incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), according to U.S. News & World Report. Publishing their findings in The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), researchers randomized 5,012 people at nine U.S. STI clinics to receive brief risk-reduction counseling and a rapid HIV test or the test without counseling (although they were asked if they had questions about the test and were provided with the test kit's information pamphlet).

Both at the beginning of the study and six months later, the investigators tested the study participants for gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis, genital herpes and HIV; the women were also tested for Trichomonas. At the end of the follow-up period, 12.3 percent of the counseling group and 11.1 percent of the test-only group had an STI.

The study's authors concluded that counseling is not an efficient use of resources if there are no apparent benefits to STI incidence reduction.

To read the U.S. News & World Report story, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

To read a JAMA press release, click here.

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