



GRINDR Thinks HIV Can Be Reduced to a Checkbox

September 16, 2016 By [Christian Kiley](#)

Wow. All I can say is wow.

After reading [yesterday's CNN coverage of popular gay hook-up app GRINDR's recent user survey](#), I'm beginning to wonder if I was right all along-- GRINDR (the original Tinder, some have argued) is a dangerous and stupid way to go about meeting someone through the internet.

For those of you who don't know, [GRINDR's](#) claim to fame has been the app's simple interface, which displays user profiles as cover photos in a grid, sorted by location-- the closest guy first. This UI already implies that gay men are getting online just to get off; and that's a debate I won't get into here.

But this latest user survey really pisses me off.

A quick summary, if this is the first you're hearing of it: GRINDR recently recruited some of its users for a survey, which poses the question:

"How would you feel if GRINDR allowed you to filter the guys you see by HIV status?"

Now if you're wondering what's wrong with this, please, bear with me.

I am no sheltered Luddite. I am not against online dating. I actually met my husband on POZ personals, at a time when I was sure I'd never meet anyone, let alone marry. I used POZ personals because I did, indeed, want to create a "filter": instead of putting myself through any more stigma-laden first-date disclosures, I wanted to see if anyone also living with HIV might be a good fit. Worth a shot, right?

Of course, that was a choice that I made after a few years of experience living with HIV. I think it's fair to say that I knew a thing or two about it. Whatever the thought process is over at GRINDR, it sure as hell isn't nuanced.

Their recent survey is all about personalizing their users' experience, so they can get the perfect sex partner. Whose bi-curious latino 8.5" dick with complementary bubble butt can also be HIV-free.

But says who?

Oh, right. Says the user. So that's cool. I mean, No one ever told a lie in an online dating situation, right? No perceivable dangers there!

Let's move on to another possible scenario: you're recently diagnosed and decide you would like to find a poz man to play with because you feel less exposed, and less guilty of possibly infecting someone you barely know. OK, that's legit. That's basically how I met my husband, can't argue with that one.

Unless.

Unless the scenario continues to unfold. Imagine, if you will, a Self-Hating, Mentally Ill Person finds their way onto GRINDR. They're desperate for something, they don't know exactly what it is-- now GRINDR is asking them to check a box.

Check one: Poz, or Neg guys?

SHMIP, as we'll call him, chooses negative, duh. From the room adjacent, his estranged father reminds him, as he often will do, that SHMIP is God's mistake. A loser, a failure, a F****t, and bad at mini-golf.

SHMIP, pushed over the edge this time, due to over-stimulation from too many energy drinks, perhaps, checks the "Poz" box.

SHMIP then disappears for days on end.

CNN has a new report: Two seemingly random men have been murdered in their own apartments. It takes a day or two for investigators to figure out that both of these men were living with HIV. Who's next?

Seem outlandish? I can think of 53 people who would probably agree with me when I say that a publicly available tool for seeking out and meeting up with gay poz men could potentially be used for evil. And another 49 whose opinions we'll never be privy to again.

OK then, let's look at the other side of the coin. You're HIV-negative, and you can't afford the ridiculous price of PreP in your area, or your doctor "doesn't feel comfortable" prescribing it to you.

Dejected, you log on to GRINDR and see that you can filter out all of the men who are HIV-positive. This is so convenient, you think!

Plus, the ones who say they're negative because they don't know they're positive! Awesome!

Wait- sorry. I that messed up- as it turns out, GRINDR's proposed check-box would not automatically include HIV testing. Yes, you heard right, dear readers: it's quite possible that an

“HIV sorting option” for a hookup app could increase HIV infections, which would be . . .unfortunate.

Especially in this day and age, when information, multiple modes of prevention, and access to treatment offer real, concrete hope for eventually stopping the spread of HIV for good; which would be the end of the epidemic, GRINDR is considering boiling things down to a button? A checkbox?

What does that make me? Separate but equal? I’m sorry, but the very idea reeks of stigma.

This is ridiculous. Even for [@GRINDR](#).

<https://t.co/ieybBfLs7q>

— Unsure/Positive (@UnsurePositive) [September 16, 2016](#)

I know that it’s been said here on POZ- and elsewhere- many, many times over, but we actually have all the tools we need right now, in this very moment, to stop the spread of HIV. Just ask the [National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors](#).

And to GRINDR, who would like to de-complicate things for all gay men, regardless of their status, might want to stick to [promoting safer sex practices](#). Let’s not reduce everyone’s HIV status to a checkbox, OK? Let’s do our part to actually #EndHIVStigma and leave this aspect of online dating as it should be- a very worthwhile, if sometimes uncomfortable, discussion between two consenting adults.

Information gathered from CNN article [Should Dating Apps have HIV filters?](#) Author: Aria Hangyu Chen, published 9/15/2016.

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<http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/grindr-thinks-hiv-can-reduced-checkbox>