



## Research Brief: Relative Effectiveness of Social Media, Dating Apps, and Information Search Sites in Promoting HIV Self-testing: Observational Cohort Study (CTN-0083)

Authors: Stafylis C, Vavala G, Wang Q et al.

### Purpose of the Study

To compare the effectiveness of three web-based platforms (social media sites, dating apps, informational sites) for promoting HIV self-testing among Latinx/Black/African American men who have sex with men (MSM). Secondary outcomes included substance use risk and factors which might impact ordering (e.g., stigma, attitudes, mistrust).

### Methods

A longitudinal observational cohort study was conducted to promote free HIV self-testing via ads placed on three online platforms: social media sites (Facebook, Instagram), dating apps (Grindr, Jack'D), and informational sites (Google, Bing) in 9 targeted locations across the US. The ads used the same culturally appropriate image and/or text related to HIV testing. Ads ran in 2 waves (Wave 1: Facebook/Grindr/Google, Wave 2: Instagram/Jack'D/Bing). Eligible participants who responded to the ads identified as MSM, aged 18-30 years, Latinx and/or Black/African American, and reported risk of HIV infection. Enrolled participants received an electronic code to order a free HIV home self-test kit and were offered a free telemedicine pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) visit. Follow-up assessments were conducted 14 and 60 days after enrollment to collect self-report data on HIV self-test use, self-test results, completion of a visit with a PrEP provider, and uptake of PrEP.

### Summary of Findings

- The investigators enrolled 254 participants across the three platforms.
- At baseline, only 8.9% of participants had received PrEP before and among those who had previously tested for HIV infection, their last test was on average 11 months ago.
- Overall, 70% of participants ordered HIV test kits during the study period. Those recruited through dating apps ordered the most test kits. Within-wave comparisons showed *Jack'D* (3.29 kits/day) had significantly higher order rates compared to *Instagram* (0.34 kits/day) and *Bing* (0 kits/day).
- There were no significant associations among self-test kit ordering and HIV-related stigma, risk behavior, attitudes toward HIV testing and treatment, and mistrust of healthcare.

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### Relevance

- Results indicate that popular dating apps might be an efficient and effective platform to promote HIV self-testing for young MSM at higher risk for HIV infection.
- Future research is needed to evaluate the reach of public health and prevention campaigns using new media outlets.
- Identifying and engaging people at higher risk for HIV infection using technology-based remote methods is a potentially important tool for community-based prevention.