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# Knowledge, attitude and practices towards HIV testing following the introduction of self-testing: The case of the ATLAS project in Côte d'Ivoire

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## Background

- HIV testing is a central element of the strategy to end AIDS epidemic, as status awareness is the entry point to HIV prevention and care.
- In Côte d'Ivoire, only 85% of people living with HIV (PLHIV) were aware of their HIV status in 2021 (UNAIDS, 2023).
- To address this gap, the ATLAS project distributed a total of ~200000 kits self-tests (HIVST) in Côte d'Ivoire between 2019 and 2022, including ~75000 in Bas-Sassandra region, targeting key populations aged 16+ and their network.
- Concurrently, a multi-media campaign Shuga-Babi, promoting testing and HIVST, was launched by MTV foundation targeting mainly population aged 15-24
- The aim of this study is to assess levels and correlates of knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) towards HIV testing and self-testing in general population after the introduction of HIVST in Bas-Sassandra, Côte d'Ivoire.**



## Method

- We conducted a population-based cross-sectional survey of the population aged 15-49 years in the Bas-Sassandra region of Côte d'Ivoire, in December 2021
- Survey: **24 months** after HIVST was introduced in the region by ATLAS and **6 months** after Shuga-Babi campaign
- The survey used a three-stage stratified sampling approach with 8 strata:
  - 3 of the strata are the 3 departments where ATLAS was implemented
  - 1 strata includes departments with almost no ATLAS activities
  - each further stratified on urban and rural settings
- Weighed proportions** were used to assess level of KAP toward HIV testing,
- Logistic regressions** were used to identified factors associated to KAP toward HIV testing

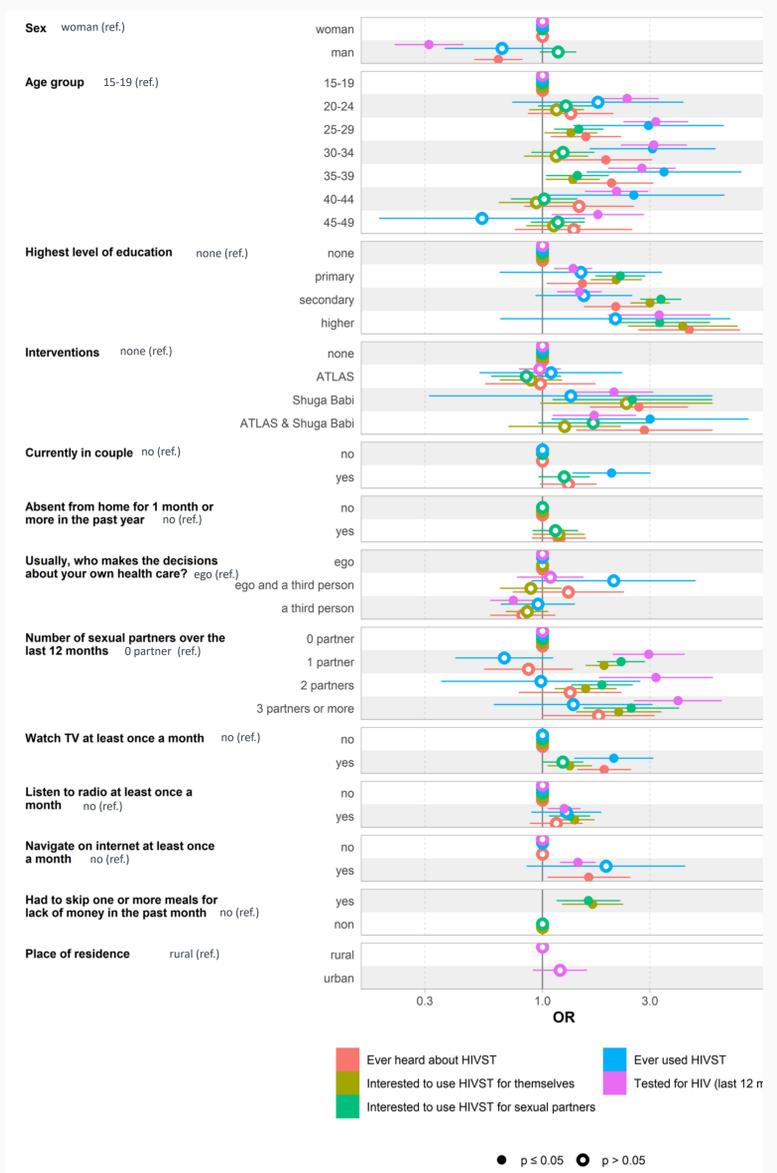


## Results

- A total of 6271 people** were interviewed (3203 males and 3068 females).
- 11% of participants reported having heard about HIVST
- Most participants showed a positive attitude toward HIVST and reported that they would be interested/very interested to use it if freely available
- About 14% reported having performed at least 1 conventional test or HIVST in the last 12 months
- While 3% of participants had already used a HIVST in the past.

**Table 1 : Level of knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) towards HIV testing**

Outcomes	(n=6271)[CI]
Ever heard about HIVST	10.6% (643)[8.3%, 13%]
Interested to use HIVST for themselves	75.6% (4762)[72%, 79%]
Interested to use HIVST for sexual partners	74.8% (4688)[71%, 78%]
Ever used HIVST	2.6% (144)[1.7%, 4.0%]
Tested for HIV (last 12 months)	14.0% (923)[12%, 16%]



**Figure 1 : Logistic regression of knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) towards HIV testing**

- Being exposed to Shuga-Babi was associated with a higher odds of **Knowing about HIVST** and the odds was even higher for those exposed to Shuga-Babi campaign who lived in ATLAS implementation strata
- Living in ATLAS implementation strata and exposure to Shuga-Babi alone was not significantly associated with the use of HIVST, but being exposed to both interventions was positively associated with previous **use of HIVST**
- Interest to use HIVST for self** was not associated with interventions
- Interest to use for sexual partners** was associated with exposition to Shuga-Babi campaign
- HIV-Testing in the last 12 months** was positively associated with exposition to Shuga-Babi campaign but was not associated to living in ATLAS implementation strata alone.



## Conclusion

- ATLAS program combined with Shuga-babi intervention was **strongly and significantly associated with HIVST use**
- Residence in ATLAS implementation strata alone was not significantly associated with KAP towards HIV testing and self-testing
- The weak association between ATLAS intervention and those outcomes could be explained by the fact that:
  - ATLAS targeted key populations and vulnerable groups which represent a small proportion of the population interviewed
  - ATLAS intervention was indirectly captured through the residence in an ATLAS strata
- These hypotheses need to be further investigated in upcoming analysis