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# HIV self-testing positivity rate and linkage to confirmatory testing and care: a telephone survey in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Senegal

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## ABSTRACT

HIV self-testing (HIVST) empowers individuals by allowing them to decide when and where to test and with whom to share their results. From 2019 to 2022, the ATLAS program distributed ~ 400 000 HIVST kits in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Senegal. It prioritised key populations, including female sex workers and men who have sex with men, and encouraged secondary distribution of HIVST to their partners, peers and clients.

To preserve the confidential nature of HIVST, use of kits and HIVST results were not systematically tracked. Therefore, an anonymous phone survey was conducted to estimate HIVST positivity rates and linkage to confirmatory testing and care. This two-step survey involved an initial recruitment phase from March to June 2021 where participants were encouraged via leaflets to call a free phone number and complete a sociobehavioural questionnaire.

This was followed by a second phase in September and October 2021, where participants who reported a reactive HIVST result were re-contacted to complete a further questionnaire. Of the 2 615 participants recruited during the first phase, 89.7% reported consistent results (2 visible lines and result interpreted as reactive; one line and interpreted as non-reactive; or no/one line and interpreted as invalid). HIVST positivity rates varied between 2.4% to 9.1% based on calculation methods (i.e. self-interpreted result or reported number of lines, inclusion or exclusion of don't knows and refusals).

The second phase saw 78 out of 126 eligible participants complete the questionnaire. Of the 27 who reported a consistent reactive result in the first phase, 15 (56%, 95%CI: 36 to 74%)

45 underwent confirmatory HIV testing, with 12 (80%) confirmed as HIV-positive, all of whom  
46 began antiretroviral treatment.

47 The confirmation rate of HIVST results was fast, with 53% doing so within a week and 91%  
48 within three months of self-testing. Two-thirds (65%) went to a general public facility, and one-  
49 third to a facility dedicated to key populations.

50 The ATLAS HIVST distribution strategy reached people living with HIV in West Africa. Linkage to  
51 confirmatory testing remained sub-optimal in these first years of HIVST implementation.  
52 However, if confirmed HIV-positive, almost all initiated treatment. HIVST constitutes a relevant  
53 complementary tool to existing screening services.

54  
55 **Keywords:** AIDS, HIV self-testing, HIV testing services, diagnosis, knowledge of status, awareness fo  
56 status, gay, bisexual, sex work, linkage to confirmatory testing and care, phone-based survey, key  
57 populations, West Africa.

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60

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## Introduction

62 Early testing followed by successful linkage to antiretroviral treatment for those diagnosed with HIV can  
63 drastically reduce the risk of onward HIV transmission and mortality [1–6]. In 2021, according to the United  
64 Nations Program for HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), 81% of the adult population living with HIV in West and Central  
65 Africa knew their status. Only 77% of them were on antiretroviral treatment [7], below the 95-95-95 UNAIDS  
66 targets for 2030 [8].

67 HIV self-testing (HIVST) is the process by which a person who wants to know their HIV status collects their  
68 own sample (oral fluid or blood), performs the test, and then interprets the results themselves, often in a  
69 private setting [9]. It is an innovative tool that empowers individuals and guarantees the confidentiality of  
70 the test [10]. Individuals may decide when and where to test and with whom they want to share their result.  
71 It has been shown to be effective in screening populations vulnerable to HIV acquisition and transmission  
72 that are often hardly reached through conventional approaches [11–13]. Since 2016, the World Health  
73 Organization (WHO) has recommended HIVST as a complementary testing approach [14].

74 Following the experience gained in Eastern and Southern Africa under the STAR project [15–21], the  
75 UNAIDS funding agency sought to stimulate HIVST in West Africa. The ATLAS programme (*AutoTest de*  
76 *dépistage du VIH: Libre d'Accéder à la connaissance de son Statut*) aimed to promote, implement, and  
77 expand HIV self-testing in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Senegal. Country national prevalence was comparatively  
78 low in West Africa in 2021: 1.9% (1.7%-2.2%) in Côte d'Ivoire, 0.8% (0.6%-1%) in Mali, and 0.3% (0.3%-0.4%)  
79 in Senegal according to UnAids[22].

80 In the ATLAS project's catchment areas, HIVST was integrated into existing testing policies, programs, and  
81 activities. A total of 397 367 HIVST kits were distributed free of charge between July 2019 and February 2022  
82 as part of the national AIDS strategy in these three countries. At the time of ATLAS' implementation, in 2019,  
83 only small-scale pilot studies on HIVST had previously been conducted in Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire, and none  
84 existed in Mali.

85 The design of the different delivery channels and the priority populations were developed with country  
86 stakeholders: national AIDS programs/councils, international institutions including the WHO, international  
87 and national non-governmental organisations involved in local HIV programs, and civil society and  
88 community leaders. ATLAS HIVST distribution was organised through eight different operational delivery  
89 channels (figure 1): five were facility-based (delivery of HIVST kits through public or community-based health  
90 facilities), and three used community-based approaches involving outreach activities engaging female sex  
91 workers (FSW), men who have sex with men (MSM), and people who use drugs (PWUD) [23]. Peer educators  
92 conducted these outreach activities through group activities (e.g. talks, discussion groups, night visits, social  
93 events, or parties) and face-to-face activities (e.g. home visits). Outreach activities represented the majority  
94 (~85%) of ATLAS's distribution volume.

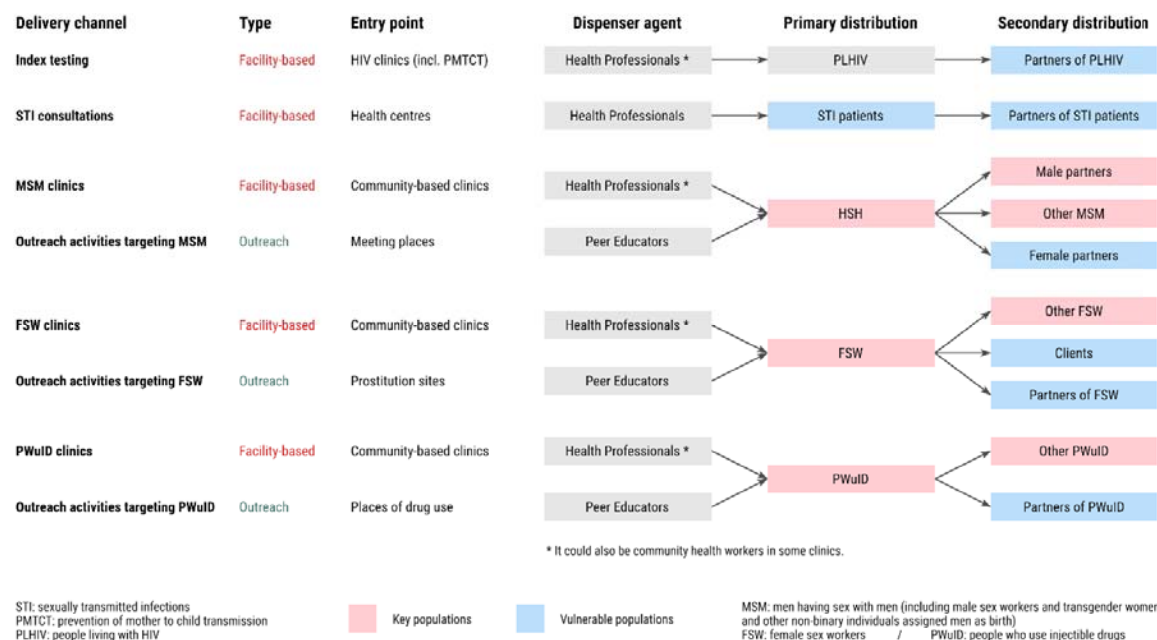


Figure 1. ATLAS delivery channels (adapted from Rouveau et al., 2021, Describing, analysing and understanding the effects of the introduction of HIV self-testing in West Africa through the ATLAS programme in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Senegal, BMC Public Health, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-10212-1>)

ATLAS activities relied on both primary and secondary distribution. HIVST kits were distributed by peer educators and healthcare professionals to primary contacts for their personal use (primary distribution). With secondary distribution, primary contacts were provided HIVST kits and invited to redistribute them to their peers, partners, and clients. These secondary contacts were often members of key populations that can be more difficult to engage in HIV prevention, along with other peripheral vulnerable populations. This chain-referral distribution of HIVST implies that end-users were not limited to primary contacts.

Only oral self-testing (OraQuick HIV Self-Test®) has been distributed through ATLAS. OraSure Technologies, the manufacturer of the OraQuick test, accompanies each HIVST kit with a user manual for result interpretation. OraQuick HIVST should be interpreted as follow: reactive if two lines (C & T) are visible, even barely; non-reactive if only the C (control) line is visible; invalid if no line is visible or if only the T (test) line is visible.

In addition to the manufacturer's instructions (figure 2), locally adapted brochures and explanatory videos in French and local languages have been developed to help users perform the test, interpret the result and know what actions should be taken following a non-reactive, a reactive or indeterminate result. They also encouraged people with a reactive HIVST to seek confirmatory HIV testing and care. Free phone lines have been set up in each country, and operators of these lines were trained about HIVST.

# ORAQUICK® HIV SELF-TEST

## INTERPRETING RESULTS Read test results in a well-lit area

### HIV POSITIVE RESULT



Two complete lines, even if the line is faint, means you may be HIV POSITIVE and you need to seek additional testing by a trained professional to confirm an HIV diagnosis.



**As soon as possible...**  
Visit your nearest  
HIV Testing Centre or  
Health Facility

### HIV NEGATIVE RESULT

**IF READ BEFORE 20 MINUTES, RESULT MAY NOT BE CORRECT**



ONE LINE next to the "C" and NO line next to the "T", your result is HIV NEGATIVE.

Seek regular testing. If you may have been exposed to HIV, test again in 3 months.

### INVALID RESULT



If there is no line next to the "C" (even when there is a line next to the "T"), the test line or control line are not complete (all the way across the window), or a red background makes it impossible to read the test, the test is not working and should be repeated. **You will need to obtain another test.**



The test did not work properly.  
Visit your nearest HIV Testing  
Centre or Health Facility to  
test again.

### NOT SURE OF RESULT

You do not know your result or you are unsure of your result. Visit your nearest HIV Testing Centre or Health Facility to test again.

### DISPOSE

Remove the test stick, put the cap on the test tube, place in the disposal bag provided and throw away all contents in the normal trash.



**Figure 2.** Guidelines for interpreting HIVST result, extracted from the English version of the manufacturer instructions for use (OraQuick HIV Self-Test®)

To preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of HIVST and not impede their use, ATLAS has decided, in line with WHO recommendations, not to track the use and outcomes of distributed HIVST kits directly. Such tracking can be logistically challenging and costly and could limit the distribution, redistribution and use of HIVST [24]. Without systematic tracking, it was challenging to obtain information on who was using the HIVST, the results of the tests and the linkage to confirmatory testing and treatment. These are crucial indicators to assess program effectiveness and impact. For instance, the positivity rate can be related to the yield of new individuals diagnosed with HIV and would suggest that the testing modality is indeed reaching those in need. Diagnosed individuals must seek confirmatory testing and be linked to care to maximise health benefits and decrease onward transmission.

We conducted an innovative survey by setting up an anonymous and free telephone platform in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Senegal while preserving anonymity and encouraging voluntary participation. This survey among ATLAS HIVST users showed that HIVST secondary distribution was feasible and acceptable. Participants reported that they appreciated the ease of use of HIVST, its discretion and the fact that they are autonomous in carrying out the test. Finally, HIVST appeared as a relevant additional approach for those

usually distant from community activities and HIV testing services, and has the potential to reach, beyond key populations, partners, clients, and other groups vulnerable to HIV [25].

A complementary survey was conducted among those with an HIVST reactive result. Here we report on HIVST's positivity rates and linkage to confirmatory testing and care.

## Materials and Methods

### Sources of data

The ATLAS program embedded multiple research activities, from qualitative studies to economic analyses, which have been described in detail elsewhere [26–30].

It included a voluntary phone survey. Between mid-March and mid-June 2021, dedicated survey flyers were distributed with the HIVST kits inviting self-test users in each country to call a toll-free number to complete a questionnaire (phase 1). All calls from the three countries were rerouted to a telephone platform located in Abidjan and operated by Ipsos Côte d'Ivoire, which was selected following an international call for tenders. The questionnaire, which lasted 20 to 30 minutes, collected information on sociodemographic characteristics of HIVST users, testing history, sexual and preventive behaviours, HIVST use and difficulties encountered. Participation in the survey was rewarded with 2 000 XOF (≈3.40 USD) of phone communication credit. In order to participate in the survey, participants had to be of legal age to use an HIVST on their own without parental permission (16 years in Côte d'Ivoire, 18 years in Mali, and 15 years in Senegal) and had to have used an HIVST provided to them through the ATLAS project.

As the survey was anonymous, there was a risk that some HIVST users may participate more than once or that individuals who have never used HIVST tried to participate to receive the financial incentive. To limit these risks, several measures were taken: (i) the leaflet distributed with the HIVST kits had a unique 9-digit number generated by the research team that was requested prior to participation in the survey; (ii) the same unique number could not be used twice; (iii) the financial incentive was only paid out once the questionnaire was fully completed (however individuals could refuse to answer any particular question); (iv) the same telephone number could not be used twice to receive the telephone credit. These unique 9-digit numbers were generated non-sequentially and were grouped by country, delivery channel and implementing partner. Thus, any unique number could indirectly identify the delivery channel where the HIVST kit was initially dispensed.

In total, 2 615 participants were recruited for phase 1 [25]. During the interviews, each participant was asked about the number of lines that appeared when reading the HIVST result and their self-interpretation of it (reactive or non-reactive). Those who reported two lines or a reactive result were asked for their consent to be called back a few months later to participate in a complementary survey and, if consented, to provide a phone contact.

Between September 27th and October 22th 2021, eligible participants who agreed to be re-contacted were phoned to complete a 5-minute questionnaire (phase 2) on linkage to confirmatory testing and care.

The interviews were conducted in either French, English, Bambara, or Wolof. On-the-fly translation into other local languages was also available. Compensation of XOF 2 000 (≈3.40 USD) in the form of telephone credit was given to participants who completed the phase 2 questionnaire. Unlike in phase 1, it was not a financial incentive: participants were informed about it only at the end of the interview. Interviews were not audio-recorded. Questionnaires' responses were captured on a computer and stored in a database managed by PAC-CI, an Ivorian research institute with expertise in clinical research.

At the end of the survey, collected telephone numbers (for appointments and rewards) were deleted from the database. All procedures have been described in a publicly available data management plan (<https://dmp.opidor.fr/plans/3354/export.pdf>).

### Data analysis

Based on phase 1 participants' self-reports, we distinguished those having reported HIVST results consistent with both the reported number of visible lines and the reported self-interpretation (2 visible lines and result interpreted as reactive; one line and interpreted as non-reactive; or no/one line and interpreted as invalid), an inconsistent result, or a partial result (they refused to answer or answered they didn't know to one or both questions).

To estimate HIVST positivity rates, we separately considered the self-interpreted results and the reported number of lines on the HIVST. For each source, we made three hypotheses (low, central and high) about “don’t know” and refusals (DK-R). Using self-reported results, the low hypothesis considered DK-R as non-reactive, and the high hypothesis as reactive, while DK-R were excluded from both the numerator and the denominator in the central hypothesis. Using the reported number of visible lines, the low hypothesis considered DK-R as one line, and the high hypothesis as two lines, while DK-R were excluded from both the numerator and the denominator in the central hypothesis. Positivity rates were stratified by respondents’ gender, country, and distribution channel.

We described the selection of eligible participants for phase 2 questionnaires and corresponding participation rates. To assess any participation bias, characteristics of phase 2 participants were compared with individuals eligible for phase 2 but who did not participate and with phase 1 participants not eligible for phase 2.

Among phase 2 eligible participants who completed their questionnaire, linkage to confirmatory testing, the proportion being confirmed HIV positive and treatment initiation were described, stratified by the reported number of lines and self-interpreted HIVST result in phase 1 questionnaire. Confidence intervals (95% confidence interval, 95%CI) were computed using Wilson’s method with Yate’s continuity correction.

We also explored (i) for those who did not link to confirmatory testing, the main reported reason; and (ii) for those who did link to confirmatory testing, the type of facility was confirmatory testing was performed and the time between HIVST and confirmatory testing.

All analyses have been performed using R version 4.2.2 [31]. A dedicated anonymised dataset and the corresponding R script are available on Zenodo ([https://doi.org/ 10.5281/zenodo.7986077](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7986077)) to allow replication of the analysis.

## **. Ethics**

ATLAS research protocol (version 3.0, October 8 2020) has been approved by the WHO Ethical Research Committee (January 12, 2021, reference: ERC 0003181), the National Ethics Committee for Life Sciences and Health of Côte d’Ivoire (November 27, 2020, reference: 191-20/MSHP/CNESVS-km, IRB:000111917), the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy of the University of Bamako, Mali (November 16, 2020, reference: 2020/254/CE/FMPOS/FAPH), and the National Ethics Committee for Health Research of Senegal (January 26, 2021, protocol SEN19/32, n°8 MSAS/CNERS/Sec).

## **Results**

### **HIVST results**

Of the 2 615 participants recruited in phase 1, 2 346 (89.7%) reported a self-interpreted HIVST result consistent with their reported number of visible lines on the HIVST: 2 292 (88.0%) reported one line and self-interpreted it as non-reactive, 50 (1.9%) two lines and reactive and 4 (0.2%) none or one line self-interpreted as invalid (table 1). In contrast, 48 (1.8%) reported inconsistent answers: 10 (0.4%) one line and self-interpreted it as reactive, 35 (1.3%) two lines and non-reactive and 3 (0.1%) no line and non-reactive.

Finally, 221 (8.5%) reported a partial result: 147 (5.6%) reported 0, 1 or 2 lines, but did not know how to interpret the result or refused to answer; 46 (1.7%) self-interpreted their result, but did not know or refused to report the number of lines; and 28 (1.1%) did not know or refused to answer to both questions



**Table 1.** Self-reported HIV self-test (HIVST) result, reported number of lines on the HIVST, and positivity rates according to different hypotheses among participants of the first phase of the survey in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Senegal (2021).

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Phase 1 participants   | 2615 (100%)        |
| <i>Consistent answer (C)</i>   | 2346 (89.7%)       |
| 2 lines / reactive <sup>†</sup> (C <sub>1</sub> )  | 50 (1.9%)          |
| 1 line / non-reactive (C <sub>2</sub> )  | 2 292 (88%)        |
| 0-1 line/ invalid (C <sub>3</sub> )  | 4 (0.2%)           |
| <i>Inconsistent answer (I)</i>   | 48 (1.8%)          |
| 1 line / reactive <sup>†</sup> (I <sub>1</sub> )   | 10 (0.4%)          |
| 0 line / reactive <sup>†</sup> (I <sub>2</sub> )   | 0 (0%)             |
| 2 lines/ non-reactive <sup>†</sup> (I <sub>3</sub> )   | 35 (1.3%)          |
| 0 line / non-reactive (I <sub>4</sub> )  | 3 (0.1%)           |
| 2 lines/ invalid <sup>†</sup> (I <sub>5</sub> )  | 0 (0%)             |
| <i>Partial answer (P)</i>  | 221 (8.5%)         |
| 0 line / DK-R (P <sub>1</sub> )  | 1 (<0.1%)          |
| 1 line / DK-R (P <sub>2</sub> )  | 117 (4.5%)         |
| 2 lines/ DK-R <sup>†</sup> (P <sub>3</sub> )   | 29 (1.1%)          |
| DK-R / reactive <sup>†</sup> (P <sub>4</sub> )   | 2 (<0.1%)          |
| DK-R / non-reactive (P <sub>5</sub> )  | 44 (1.7%)          |
| DK-R / invalid (P <sub>6</sub> )   | 0 (0%)             |
| DK-R / DK-R (P <sub>7</sub> )  | 28 (1.1%)          |
| <b>Positivity Rate</b>   |                    |
| <i>Based on self-interpreted test results</i>  |                    |
| <i>Low hypothesis (DK-R as not reactive)</i><br>(C <sub>1</sub> + I <sub>1</sub> + I <sub>2</sub> + P <sub>4</sub> ) / n   | 62 / 2615 (2.4 %)  |
| <i>Central hypothesis (DK-R excluded)</i><br>(C <sub>1</sub> + I <sub>1</sub> + I <sub>2</sub> + P <sub>4</sub> ) / (C + I + P <sub>4</sub> + P <sub>5</sub> + P <sub>6</sub> )  | 62 / 2440 (2.5 %)  |
| <i>High hypothesis (DK-R as reactive)</i><br>(C <sub>1</sub> + I <sub>1</sub> + I <sub>2</sub> + P <sub>1</sub> + P <sub>2</sub> + P <sub>3</sub> + P <sub>4</sub> + P <sub>7</sub> ) / n  | 237 / 2615 (9.1%)  |
| <i>Based on the reported number of lines</i>   |                    |
| <i>Low hypothesis (DK-R as 1 line)</i><br>(C <sub>1</sub> + I <sub>3</sub> + I <sub>5</sub> + P <sub>3</sub> ) / n   | 114 / 2615 (4.4 %) |
| <i>Central hypothesis mid (DK-R excluded)</i><br>(C <sub>1</sub> + I <sub>3</sub> + I <sub>5</sub> + P <sub>3</sub> ) / (C + I + P <sub>1</sub> + P <sub>2</sub> + P <sub>3</sub> )  | 114 / 2541 (4.5 %) |
| <i>High hypothesis (DK-R as 2 lines)</i><br>(C <sub>1</sub> + I <sub>3</sub> + I <sub>5</sub> + P <sub>3</sub> + P <sub>4</sub> + P <sub>5</sub> + P <sub>6</sub> + P <sub>7</sub> ) / (C + I + P <sub>1</sub> + P <sub>2</sub> + P <sub>3</sub> ) | 188 / 2615 (7.2 %) |
| †: Eligible for phase 2 Survey   |                    |
| DK: don't know. R: refused to answer   |                    |

## HIVST positivity rates

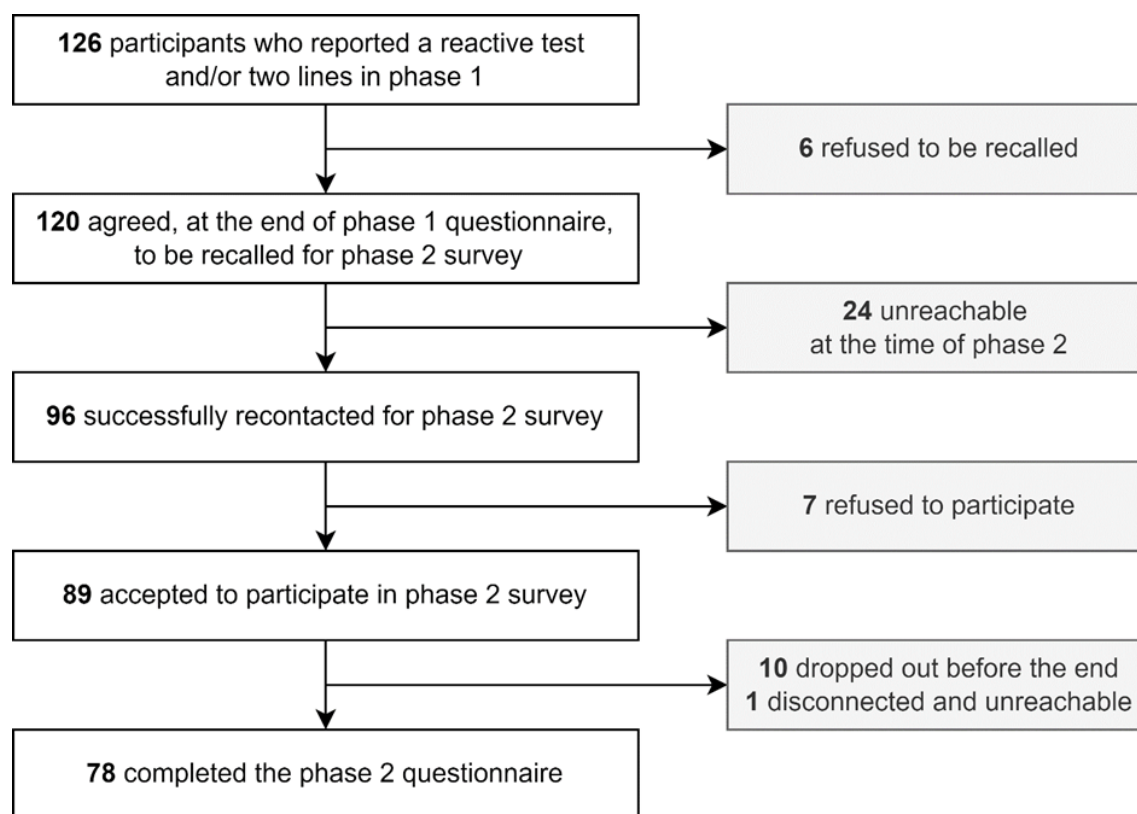
Based on self-interpreted HIVST results, the overall positivity rate was 2.4% when DK-R were considered non-reactive (Table 2, low hypothesis). By excluding DK-R from the numerator and the denominator (central hypothesis), the positivity rate increased to 2.5%. Considering DK-R as reactive (high hypothesis) increased the positivity rate to 9.1%. Estimates based on the reported number of visible lines on the HIVST were 4.4%, 4.5% and 7.2%, respectively, for low, central and high hypotheses. Positivity rates ranged from 1.8% to 9.8% in Côte d'Ivoire, 3.5% to 7.8% in Mali, and 1.2% to 15.0% in Senegal depending on the hypothesis (e.g., low or high; Table 2).

Positivity rates were higher among participants recruited through community-based distribution channels: 4.8% for men and 4.9% for women in the MSM-based channels, and 4.6% for men and 4.2% for women in the FSW-based channels (central hypothesis based on the number of lines). In the other distribution channels (PWUD-based and facility-based), positivity rates were slightly lower: 3.1% for men and 2.9% for women.

## Participation in phase 2

During phase 1, 126 individuals reported two lines or self-interpreted their result as reactive, thus were identified as eligible for phase 2 (table 1). Among them, 6 had refused to be re-contacted after phase 1 (figure 3). Among the 120 (95%) who agreed to be re-contacted, 24 (20%) were unreachable at the time of the phase 2 survey, and 96 (80%) were successfully re-contacted. Among the latest, 89 (93%) accepted to participate in the phase 2 survey. Ten dropped out before the end of the interview, and 1 disconnected and was unreachable afterwards. As a result, 78 participants completed phase 2 questionnaire.

The participants who completed the phase 2 questionnaire had similar sociodemographic characteristics (e.g. country, sex, distribution channel, age group, marital status) compared to those eligible for phase 2, but that did not complete it, and to phase 1 participants not eligible for phase 2 (table S1). For most participants (86%), phase 2 questionnaire was completed between 4 and 6 months after phase 1 questionnaire (table S5).



**Figure 3.** Flow chart of the participant selection process for the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the survey in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Senegal (2021).

**Table 2.** Positivity rates based on self-interpreted HIVST results or the reported number of visible lines, by distribution channel, gender and country, among participants of the first survey phase in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Senegal (2021).

|   |         |               | MSM-based channels |              | FSW-based channels |                | Others delivery channels |              | Total            |
|---|---------|---------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------|------------------|
|   |         |               | Man                | Woman        | Man                | Woman          | Man                      | Woman        |                  |
| Positivity rate based on self-reported HIVST results          | Low     | Côte d'Ivoire | 2.5% (16/650)      | 1.4% (1/73)  | 1.5% (5/339)       | 1.2% (3/245)   | 0% (0/60)                | 0% (0/23)    | 1.8% (25/1 390)  |
|   |         | Mali          | 4.6% (14/306)      | 0% (0/29)    | 1.9% (5/269)       | 3.9% (14/360)  | 9.1% (1/11)              | 0% (0/9)     | 3.5% (34/984)    |
|   |         | Senegal       | 4.9% (2/41)        | 0% (0/1)     | 0% (0/12)          | 0% (0/80)      | 0% (0/66)                | 2.4% (1/41)  | 1.2% (3/241)     |
|   |         | Overall       | 3.2% (32/997)      | 1.0% (1/103) | 1.6% (10/620)      | 2.5% (17/685)  | 0.7% (1/137)             | 1.4% (1/73)  | 2.4% (62/2 615)  |
|   | Central | Côte d'Ivoire | 2.7% (16/597)      | 1.4% (1/71)  | 1.6% (5/311)       | 1.4% (3/221)   | 0% (0/58)                | 0% (0/21)    | 2.0% (25/1 279)  |
|   |         | Mali          | 4.7% (14/301)      | 0% (0/29)    | 1.9% (5/257)       | 4.1% (14/345)  | 9.1% (1/11)              | 0% (0/9)     | 3.6% (34/952)    |
|   |         | Senegal       | 6.1% (2/33)        | 0% (0/1)     | 0% (0/11)          | 0% (0/65)      | 0% (0/61)                | 2.6% (1/38)  | 1.4% (3/209)     |
|   |         | Overall       | 3.4% (32/931)      | 1.0% (1/101) | 1.7% (10/579)      | 2.7% (17/631)  | 0.8% (1/130)             | 1.5% (1/68)  | 2.5% (62/2 440)  |
|   | High    | Côte d'Ivoire | 10.6% (69/650)     | 4.1% (3/73)  | 9.7% (33/339)      | 11% (27/245)   | 3.3% (2/60)              | 8.7% (2/23)  | 9.8% (136/1 390) |
|   |         | Mali          | 6.2% (19/306)      | 0% (0/29)    | 6.3% (17/269)      | 8.1% (29/360)  | 9.1% (1/11)              | 0% (0/9)     | 6.7% (66/984)    |
|   |         | Senegal       | 24.0% (10/41)      | 0.0% (0/1)   | 8.3% (1/12)        | 19.0% (15/80)  | 7.6% (5/66)              | 9.8% (4/41)  | 15.0% (35/241)   |
|   |         | Overall       | 9.8% (98/997)      | 2.9% (3/103) | 8.2% (51/620)      | 10.0% (71/685) | 5.8% (8/137)             | 8.2% (6/73)  | 9.1% (237/2 615) |
| Positivity rate based on the reported number of visible lines | Low     | Côte d'Ivoire | 4.2% (27/650)      | 5.5% (4/73)  | 4.7% (16/339)      | 2.0% (5/245)   | 0% (0/60)                | 4.3% (1/23)  | 3.8% (53/1 390)  |
|   |         | Mali          | 4.9% (15/306)      | 3.4% (1/29)  | 4.5% (12/269)      | 5.3% (19/360)  | 9.1% (1/11)              | 0% (0/9)     | 4.9% (48/984)    |
|   |         | Senegal       | 12.2% (5/41)       | 0% (0/1)     | 0% (0/12)          | 5.0% (4/80)    | 4.5% (3/66)              | 2.4% (1/41)  | 5.4% (13/241)    |
|   |         | Overall       | 4.7% (47/997)      | 4.9% (5/103) | 4.5% (28/620)      | 4.1% (28/685)  | 2.9% (4/137)             | 2.7% (2/73)  | 4.4% (114/2 615) |
|   | Central | Côte d'Ivoire | 4.2% (27/641)      | 5.5% (4/73)  | 4.8% (16/331)      | 2.1% (5/241)   | 0% (0/60)                | 4.5% (1/22)  | 3.9% (53/1 368)  |
|   |         | Mali          | 5.0% (15/298)      | 3.4% (1/29)  | 4.5% (12/264)      | 5.5% (19/344)  | 9.1% (1/11)              | 0% (0/9)     | 5.0% (48/955)    |
|   |         | Senegal       | 13.2% (5/38)       | 0% (0/1)     | 0% (0/10)          | 5.3% (4/75)    | 5.3% (3/57)              | 2.7% (1/37)  | 6.0% (13/218)    |
|   |         | Overall       | 4.8% (47/977)      | 4.9% (5/103) | 4.6% (28/605)      | 4.2% (28/660)  | 3.1% (4/128)             | 2.9% (2/68)  | 4.5% (114/2 541) |
|   | High    | Côte d'Ivoire | 5.5% (36/650)      | 5.5% (4/73)  | 7.1% (24/339)      | 3.7% (9/245)   | 0% (0/60)                | 8.7% (2/23)  | 5.4% (75/1 390)  |
|   |         | Mali          | 7.5% (23/306)      | 3.4% (1/29)  | 6.3% (17/269)      | 9.7% (35/360)  | 9.1% (1/11)              | 0% (0/9)     | 7.8% (77/984)    |
|   |         | Senegal       | 19.5% (8/41)       | 0% (0/1)     | 16.7% (2/12)       | 11.2% (9/80)   | 18.2% (12/66)            | 12.2% (5/41) | 14.9% (36/241)   |
|   |         | Overall       | 6.7% (67/997)      | 4.9% (5/103) | 6.9% (43/620)      | 7.7% (53/685)  | 9.5% (13/137)            | 9.6% (7/73)  | 7.2% (188/2 615) |

DK: don't know. R: refusals. FSW: female sex workers, MSM: men having sex with men, PR: positivity rate. Shaded cells indicated cells with less than 50 participants. Low hypothesis: DK-R as non-reactive or 1 line. Central hypothesis: DK-R excluded from the numerator and the denominator. High hypothesis: DK-R as reactive or 2 lines.

## Linkage to confirmatory testing and care

Overall, 34 of the 78 participants of phase 2 survey (44%) reported having performed confirmatory testing. Linkage was higher for those who reported 2 lines and correctly self-interpreted their result as reactive: 56% (95%CI: 36-74%), followed by those who reported two lines but did not know or refused to report their test interpretation with a linkage rate of 44% (95%CI: 22-69%). Not surprisingly, linkage to confirmatory testing was lower (36%; 95%CI: 19-57%) among those who reported 2 lines but incorrectly self-interpreted the result as non-reactive (table 3). Finally, among the 8 participants who reported none or one line or did not know how many lines and incorrectly self-interpreted the result as reactive, only 2 linked to confirmatory testing.

The main reason given for not linking to confirmatory testing was that “their HIVST was non-reactive” (18/44, 41%, and although 8 of these 18 reported a reactive result in phase 1 questionnaire); followed by “not knowing that a confirmation test was required” (10/44, 23%); and “not having time” (8/44, 18%) (table S2).

When participants were linked to confirmatory testing, it was a short time after performing their HIVST: 53% linked in less than one week and 91% in less than 3 months (table S3).

Most participants (65%) performed their confirmatory testing in a general public facility (health centre, hospital, clinic or maternity), and 35% chose a community-based clinic or health centre dedicated to key populations (table S4).

Among the 34 linked to confirmatory testing, 19 (56%, 95%CI: 38-72%) were confirmed HIV-positive, and 18 (95%, 95%CI: 72-100%) initiated antiretroviral treatment. Among the 27 who reported a consistent reactive result in the phase 1 questionnaire, 15 (56%, 95%CI: 36-74%) linked to confirmatory test, 12 (80%) were confirmed HIV-positive and all started treatment (100%).

**Table 3.** Linkage to confirmatory testing, proportion being confirmed HIV positive and treatment initiation, by reported number of lines and self-interpreted HIVST result among eligible participants of the second phase of the survey who completed their questionnaire in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Senegal (2021).

| Reported number of lines/<br>self-interpreted HIVST result | Completed<br>phase 2<br>n | Linked to confirmatory testing |            | Confirmed HIV positive |            | Initiated ART |             |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|------------------------|------------|---------------|-------------|
|  |                           | n (%)                          | 95%CI      | n (%)                  | 95%CI      | n (%)         | 95%CI       |
| Overall  | 78                        | 34 (44%)                       | 33% to 55% | 19 (56%)               | 38% to 72% | 18 (95%)      | 72% to 100% |
| 2 lines / reactive   | 27                        | 15 (56%)                       | 36% to 74% | 12 (80%)               | 51% to 95% | 12 (100%)     | 70% to 100% |
| 1 line / reactive  | 7                         | 1 (14%)                        | 1% to 58%  | 0 (0%)                 | 0% to 80%  |               |             |
| 2 lines / non-reactive                                     | 25                        | 9 (36%)                        | 19% to 57% | 3 (33%)                | 9% to 69%  | 3 (100%)      | 31% to 100% |
| 2 lines / DK-R   | 18                        | 8 (44%)                        | 22% to 69% | 4 (50%)                | 22% to 78% | 3 (75%)       | 22% to 99%  |
| DK-R / reactive  | 1                         | 1(100%)                        | 5% to 100% | 0 (0%)                 | 0% to 95%  |               |             |

DK: don't know. R: refuse to answer. CI: confidence interval.

293

## Discussion

294 Our study reveals that the strategy deployed by the ATLAS program, through secondary distribution  
295 of HIVST and targeted channels, successfully reached people living with HIV in West Africa. However,  
296 linkage to confirmatory HIV testing and access to care remained sub-optimal during these initial years of  
297 HIVST implementation. Moreover, among participants who confirmed their reactive self-test result with a  
298 traditional facility-based HIV test, a significant proportion quickly proceeded with this confirmation (more  
299 than half in less than a week and the vast majority in less than three months). Furthermore, if individuals  
300 were confirmed HIV-positive, almost all began antiretroviral treatment.

301 The implementation of a telephone survey, aimed at gathering information from HIVST users while  
302 preserving anonymity and without interfering with secondary distribution, has proven to be very useful  
303 to evaluate the ATLAS project. However, its high cost makes it difficult to integrate it into national  
304 strategies for assessing the impact of HIVST. Nevertheless, other impact evaluation methods, such as  
305 data triangulation[27] and modelling, may prove more suitable for routine monitoring of HIVST's impacts.

306 In our study, most participants (90%) demonstrated a consistent interpretation between the number  
307 of lines reported and the declared result of their HIVST. However, 2% of them reported an inconsistent  
308 interpretation of the results. Among them, a small number reported the presence of two visible lines,  
309 suggesting potential issues in interpreting the number of visible lines on HIVST kits. In the context of the  
310 ATLAS program, the distribution strategy combining primary and secondary approaches has led many  
311 HIVST users to perform their HIVST without receiving advice from a healthcare professional or a trained  
312 peer educator. Although the HIVST is not designed to require supervision, it is essential to have received  
313 information on its use before proceeding with the test. However, the lack of supervision is likely  
314 insufficient to explain the inconsistencies observed [32]. Some inconsistencies may result from a  
315 misunderstanding of the terms "*reactive*" and "*non-reactive*", particularly considering that HIVST was a  
316 new tool in our context and that traditional terms used to describe conventional HIV testing are  
317 "*positive*" and "*negative*". This possible misunderstanding of the terms is also highlighted by the fact that  
318 8 participants reported a "*reactive*" result in phase 1 questionnaire and then in phase 2 that their test  
319 was "*non-reactive*" as the main reason for not linking to confirmatory testing. Specific qualitative  
320 interviews or focus groups discussion with HIVST users could help better understand how they perceive  
321 different terms.

322 According to our estimates, HIVST positivity rates range from 1.8% to 9.8% in Côte d'Ivoire, 3.5% to  
323 7.8% in Mali, and 1.2% to 15.0% in Senegal depending on how missing results (e.g., "*don't know*" and  
324 refusals) are classified. It is important to interpret these HIV positivity rates while considering the  
325 treatment-adjusted prevalence (i.e., removing those on treatment from the numerator and denominator  
326 of HIV prevalence), a more reliable indicator for evaluating the effectiveness of targeted screening  
327 programs [33]. In West Africa, the treatment-adjusted prevalence remained relatively low in 2021: 0.6%  
328 in Côte d'Ivoire, 0.7% in Mali, and 0.06% in Senegal, according to UNAIDS data  
329 (<https://aidsinfo.unaids.org/>). Our results suggest that the ATLAS HIVST distribution strategy successfully  
330 reached people living with HIV. In 2021, the observed HIV positivity rates for conventional HIV testing  
331 were 1.4% in Côte d'Ivoire, 2.2% in Mali, and 1.0% in Senegal [34]. These rates were slightly lower to  
332 those we identified with HIVST based on our lower (conservative) assumption. Between 2020 and 2021,  
333 ATLAS implementing partners collected spontaneous feedback from HIVST users. This unpublished data  
334 collection was non-systematic and varied from one partner to another. Among 4 463 documented  
335 feedbacks, HIVST was reactive for 188 cases (4.2%), consistent with our estimates based on the reported  
336 number of visible lines (4.5%, central hypothesis).

337 Overall, these results for HIVST positivity are generally higher than the average overall positivity of  
338 HIV testing services (excluding HIVST) in West Africa. For instance, in 2020 an estimated 1.9% of all HIV  
339 tests performed were found to be positive in the region (95% credible intervals: 1.3 to 2.7%) [34].  
340 Further, among 15-24 and 25-34 years old, which constitute more than 80% of our sample, overall  
341 positivity was, respectively, 0.9% (0.7 to 1.3%) and 1.6% (1.2 to 2.2%). Collectively, these results provide  
342 evidence that HIVST is a high-yield testing modality that can address the unmet HIV testing needs of key  
343 populations and their partners.

344 Our linkage to confirmatory testing estimates were based on small numbers resulting in large  
345 confidence intervals. Nevertheless, the overall proportion was clearly sub-optimal (44%, 95% confidence

interval from 33% to 55%). However, this estimate includes some individuals who did not adequately self-interpreted their HIVST result as reactive. When considering only those who reported two lines and self-interpreted their result as reactive, the linkage rate increased to 56% (36% to 74%). This percentage is close to that was observed in a study conducted in Kenya on HIV testing of FSW male partners using HIVST secondary distribution, where 65% of men with a reactive result had a confirmatory test [35]. Linkage to confirmatory testing happened relatively quickly after HIVST use: 53% did it in less than a week and 91% in less than three months. Similar results were observed in a study in the general population in Zambia[36], and a study among MSM in Nigeria [37]. For those who did confirmatory testing and were confirmed HIV positive, initiation of antiretroviral treatment was almost systematic, showing good linkage to care after confirmatory testing, as observed in many HIVST studies in sub-Saharan Africa [38–40].

Previous analyses of ATLAS data showed that HIVST could reach people not reached by conventional HIV testing approaches [41], particularly partners and clients of key populations and key population members not self-identifying as such [25]. It is consistent with the finding that two-thirds of participants who did confirmatory testing went to a general health facility rather than a community clinic dedicated to key populations. In a study conducted in 2018 in Côte d'Ivoire among MSM, one-third of the participants preferred community-based testing, one-third expressed no preference, and one-third preferred undifferentiated HIV testing services (general population), mentioning the lack of discretion and anonymity of community-based sites and the desire to avoid the gaze of others [42].

ATLAS' HIVST distribution strategy successfully reached people living with HIV in West Africa, although linkage to confirmatory testing remained sub-optimal in these first years of HIVST implementation. We showed that HIVST has the potential to reach more hidden populations and constitutes a relevant complementary tool to existing screening services. To fully harness the potential of self-tests, messaging around HIVST and its interpretation could be improved.

## Appendices

Table S1. Eligibility and participation in phase 2 survey by sociodemographic characteristics, distribution channel, HIV testing history, the reported number of lines and the self-interpreted HIV self-testing (HIVST) result

|                                     | Overall<br>N= 2 615<br>(phase 1 participants) | Eligible for phase 2 completed<br>the questionnaire<br>N=78 | Eligible for phase 2 but did not<br>complete the questionnaire<br>N= 42 | Not eligible for<br>Phase 2<br>N = 2495 | p-value<br>(Chi <sup>2</sup> test) |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Country</b>                      |   |   |   |   | 0.9                                |
| Côte d'Ivoire                       | 1 390 (53%)                                   | 39 (50%)  | 20 (48%)  | 1 331 (53%)                             |                                    |
| Mali                                | 984 (38%)                                     | 31 (40%)  | 18 (43%)  | 935 (37%)                               |                                    |
| Senegal                             | 241 (9.2%)                                    | 8 (10%)   | 4 (9.5%)  | 229 (9.2%)                              |                                    |
| <b>Sex and distribution channel</b> |   |   |   |   | 0.3                                |
| man MSM-based channels              | 997 (38%)                                     | 35 (45%)  | 14 (33%)  | 948 (38%)                               |                                    |
| woman MSM-based channels            | 103 (3.9%)                                    | 5 (6.4%)  | 0 (0%)  | 98 (3.9%)                               |                                    |
| man FSW-based channels              | 620 (24%)                                     | 22 (28%)  | 10 (24%)  | 588 (24%)                               |                                    |
| woman FSW-based channels            | 685 (26%)                                     | 14 (18%)  | 15 (36%)  | 656 (26%)                               |                                    |
| man other-based channels            | 137 (5.2%)                                    | 1 (1.3%)  | 2 (4.8%)  | 134 (5.4%)                              |                                    |
| woman other-based channels          | 73 (2.8%)                                     | 1 (1.3%)  | 1 (2.4%)  | 71 (2.8%)                               |                                    |
| <b>Age group</b>                    |   |   |   |   | 0.5                                |
| 24 years or younger                 | 1 164 (45%)                                   | 27 (35%)  | 20 (48%)  | 1 117 (45%)                             |                                    |
| 25-34 years                         | 1 063 (41%)                                   | 38 (49%)  | 16 (38%)  | 1 009 (40%)                             |                                    |
| 35 years or older                   | 388 (15%)                                     | 13 (17%)  | 6 (14%)   | 369 (15%)                               |                                    |
| <b>Marital status</b>               |   |   |   |   | 0.3                                |
| single                              | 1 761 (67%)                                   | 54 (69%)  | 28 (67%)  | 1 679 (67%)                             |                                    |
| living with partner / married       | 757 (29%)                                     | 18 (23%)  | 12 (29%)  | 727 (29%)                               |                                    |
| divorced / separated / widowed      | 97 (3.7%)                                     | 6 (7.7%)  | 2 (4.8%)  | 89 (3.6%)                               |                                    |
| <b>Educational level</b>            |   |   |   |   | 0.057                              |
| none / primary                      | 503 (19%)                                     | 13 (17%)  | 10 (24%)  | 480 (19%)                               |                                    |
| secondary                           | 1 432 (55%)                                   | 50 (64%)  | 28 (67%)  | 1 354 (54%)                             |                                    |
| higher                              | 680 (26%)                                     | 15 (19%)  | 4 (9.5%)  | 661 (26%)                               |                                    |
| <b>First time testers</b>           |   |   |   |   | 0.3                                |
| yes                                 | 1 078 (41%)                                   | 38 (49%)  | 20 (48%)  | 1 020 (41%)                             |                                    |
| No                                  | 1 537 (59%)                                   | 40 (51%)  | 22 (52%)  | 1 475 (59%)                             |                                    |



|                               | Overall<br>N= 2 615<br>(phase 1 participants) | Eligible for phase 2 completed<br>the questionnaire<br>N=78 | Eligible for phase 2 but did not<br>complete the questionnaire<br>N= 42 | Not eligible for<br>Phase 2<br>N = 2495 | p-value<br>(Chi <sup>2</sup> test) |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Result and number line</b> |   |   |   |   | <0.001                             |
| 2 lines / reactive            | 50 (1.9%)                                     | 27 (35%)  | 20 (48%)  | 3 (0.1%)                                |                                    |
| 1 line / not reactive         | 2 292 (88%)                                   | 0 (0%)  | 0 (0%)  | 2 292 (92%)                             |                                    |
| 0 line / not reactive         | 3 (0.1%)                                      | 0 (0%)  | 0 (0%)  | 3 (0.1%)                                |                                    |
| 2 lines/ not reactive         | 35 (1.3%)                                     | 25 (32%)  | 9 (21%)   | 1 (<0.1%)                               |                                    |
| 1 line / reactive             | 10 (0.4%)                                     | 7 (9.0%)  | 3 (7.1%)  | 0 (0%)                                  |                                    |
| 0-1 line/ invalid             | 4 (0.2%)                                      | 0 (0%)  | 0 (0%)  | 4 (0.2%)                                |                                    |
| 2 lines/ DK-R                 | 29 (1.1%)                                     | 18 (23%)  | 9 (21%)   | 2 (<0.1%)                               |                                    |
| 1 line / DK-R                 | 117 (4.5%)                                    | 0 (0%)  | 0 (0%)  | 117 (4.7%)                              |                                    |
| 0 line / DK-R                 | 1 (<0.1%)                                     | 0 (0%)  | 0 (0%)  | 1 (<0.1%)                               |                                    |
| DK-R / reactive               | 2 (<0.1%)                                     | 1 (1.3%)  | 1 (2.4%)  | 0 (0%)                                  |                                    |
| DK-R / not reactive           | 44 (1.7%)                                     | 0 (0%)  | 0 (0%)  | 44 (1.8%)                               |                                    |
| DK-R / DK-R                   | 28 (1.1%)                                     | 0 (0%)  | 0 (0%)  | 28 (1.1%)                               |                                    |

FSW: female sex workers, MSM: men having sex with men

Table S2. Main reason for not linking to confirmatory testing among phase 2 participants who did not link to confirmatory testing, by reported number of lines and self-interpreted HIVST result.

|   | Overall   | 2 lines /<br>reactive | 1 line /<br>reactive | 2 lines /<br>non-reactive | 2 lines /<br>DK-R |
|---|-----------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| My test was non-reactive                        | 18 (4.1%) | 6 (50%)               | 2 (33%)              | 5 (31%)                   | 5 (50%)           |
| I didn't know he should get a confirmatory test | 10 (2.3%) | 2 (17%)               | 2 (33%)              | 5 (31%)                   | 1 (10%)           |
| I didn't have time                              | 8 (1.8%)  | 3 (25%)               | 0 (0%)               | 3 (19%)                   | 2 (20%)           |
| I feared that others would know the result      | 2 (4.5%)  | 0 (0%)                | 0 (0%)               | 1 (6.2%)                  | 1 (10%)           |
| I already knew the result before using HIVST    | 2 (4.5%)  | 1 (8.3%)              | 1 (17%)              | 0 (0%)                    | 0 (0%)            |
| I had no specific reason                        | 2 (4.5%)  | 0 (0%)                | 1 (17%)              | 1 (6.2%)                  | 0 (0%)            |
| I didn't know where to take the test            | 1 (2.3%)  | 0 (0%)                | 0 (0%)               | 1 (6.2%)                  | 0 (0%)            |
| The testing site was too far away               | 1 (2.3%)  | 0 (0%)                | 0 (0%)               | 0 (0%)                    | 1 (10%)           |
| Total   | 44 (100%) | 12 (27.3%)            | 6 (13.6%)            | 16 (36.4%)                | 10 (22.7%)        |

DK: don't know. R: refuse to answer

Table S3. Time between HIVST and confirmatory testing among phase 2 participants who did link to confirmatory testing, by reported number of lines and self-interpreted HIVST result.

|                            | Overall   | 2 lines /reactive | 1 line /reactive | 2 lines /non-reactive | 2 lines /DK-R | DK-R / reactive |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| less than a week           | 18 (53%)  | 12 (80%)          | 0 (0%)           | 0 (0%)                | 6 (75%)       | 0 (0%)          |
| between 1 and 2 weeks      | 4 (12%)   | 1 (6.7%)          | 0 (0%)           | 2 (22%)               | 1 (12%)       | 0 (0%)          |
| between 3 and 4 weeks      | 2 (5.9%)  | 1 (6.7%)          | 0 (0%)           | 0 (0%)                | 1 (12%)       | 0 (0%)          |
| between one and two months | 7 (21%)   | 1 (6.7%)          | 0 (0%)           | 5 (56%)               | 0 (0%)        | 1 (100%)        |
| more than 3 months         | 3 (8.8%)  | 0 (0%)            | 1 (100%)         | 2 (22%)               | 0 (0%)        | 0 (0%)          |
| Total                      | 34 (100%) | 15 (44.2%)        | 1 (2.9%)         | 9 (26.5%)             | 8 (23.5%)     | 1 (2.9%)        |

DK: don't know. R: refuse to answer

Table S4. Place of confirmatory testing among phase 2 participants who did link to confirmatory testing, by reported number of lines and self-interpreted HIVST result.

|   | Overall   | 2 lines /reactive | 1 line /reactive | 2 lines /non-reactive | 2 lines /DK-R | DK-R / reactive |
|---|-----------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Health Center / Hospital / Clinic / Maternity | 12 (35%)  | 3 (20%)           | 0 (0%)           | 6 (67%)               | 3 (38%)       | 0 (0%)          |
| Community Clinic / KP-dedicated Health Center | 22 (65%)  | 12 (80%)          | 1 (100%)         | 3 (33%)               | 5 (62%)       | 1 (100%)        |
| Total   | 34 (100%) | 15 (44.2%)        | 1 (2.9%)         | 9 (26.5%)             | 8 (23.5%)     | 1 (2.9%)        |

DK: don't know. R: refuse to answer

Table S5. Time between phase 1 and phase 2 interviews among phase 2 participants who did link to confirmatory testing, by reported number of lines and self-interpreted HIVST result.

|                        | Overall   | 2 lines /reactive | 1 line /reactive | 2 lines /non-reactive | 2 lines /DK-R | DK-R / reactive |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| between 4 and 6 months | 67 (86%)  | 24 (89%)          | 5 (71%)          | 21 (84%)              | 17 (94%)      | 0 (0%)          |
| less than 4 months     | 8 (10%)   | 3 (11%)           | 0 (0%)           | 4 (16%)               | 1 (5.6%)      | 0 (0%)          |
| more than 6 months     | 3 (3.8%)  | 0 (0%)            | 2 (29%)          | 0 (0%)                | 0 (0%)        | 1 (100%)        |
| Total                  | 34 (100%) | 15 (44.2%)        | 1 (2.9%)         | 9 (26.5%)             | 8 (23.5%)     | 1 (2.9%)        |

DK: don't know. R: refuse to answer

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## 398 Data, scripts, code, and supplementary information availability

399 Data, scripts and code are available online on the Zenodo website.  
400 (<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7986077>);

## 401 Conflict of interest disclosure

402 The authors declare that they comply with the PCI rule of no financial conflicts of interest in relation  
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