

# Scaling up HIV and STI testing of gay men and other MSM in Germany by community based campaigns

HIV in Europe - Working Together for Optimal Testing und Earlier Care  
Copenhagen 2012 Conference

Matthias Kuske<sup>1</sup>, Peter Wiessner<sup>1</sup>, Jochen Drewes<sup>2</sup>, Joachim Kuck<sup>2</sup>, Dieter Kleiber<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

In 2009 and 2010 HIV- and STI- testing campaigns for gay men and other MSM were embedded under the umbrella of the nationwide community based HIV- and STI- prevention campaign ICH WEISS WAS ICH TU (IWWIT - I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING) [www.iwwit.de](http://www.iwwit.de).



## Objectives

Objectives of the testing campaigns were to highlight the importance of HIV and STI counselling and testing in primary and secondary prevention, to lower the number of HIV infections and to strengthen the prevention capacities of the gay community. The study aimed to evaluate the impact of the campaigns to scale up willingness and testing behaviour among gay men and other MSM.

## Methods:

The data presented was collected in two online-questionnaires in the evaluation of the umbrella campaign I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING, primarily using gay dating portals for acquisition. 6.399 / 21.928 people participated. The questionnaires were published 2008 before the start of the campaign (baseline survey) and 2010/11 after two years of campaigning (evaluation survey). Beyond this both testing campaigns were evaluated separately.

## Results:

The questionnaires included two items concerning HIV- and STI- testing. One item reviewed the change in testing-behaviour and recent conducted HIV tests (last 12 month), the other the intention to conduct HIV- and STI- tests in the near future (next 6 month).

Concerning recent conducted tests and testing-behaviour the survey showed that within the gay community HIV-testing behaviour changed significantly. In the baseline survey 33 % of the respondents reported a HIV-test within the last 12 month, whereas in the evaluation survey 43 % reported a recent test (tb.1).

	baseline-survey	evaluation survey (campaign user)	p
N	5,138	5,521	
recent HIV-test	33,0 %	42,6 %	<,001

Table 1: Indicator recent HIV-test, pre-post-comparison (basis: all HIV-negative and untested participants)

The intensity of campaign usage had also significant impact on testing behaviour: non-users reported 31,3 % HIV-testing in the last 12 month, average users 39,4 % and intense users 46,6 % (tb.2).

	non campaign users	average campaign users	intense campaign users	p
N	13,159	3,046	2,475	
recent HIV-test	31,3 %	39,4 %	46,6 %	<,001

Table 2: Indicator recent HIV-test, comparison of usage intensity (basis: all HIV-negative and untested participants)

Both effects can be shown in all analyzed subgroups (including so called "hard-to-reach" groups): young MSM up to 20, MSM with lower education, MSM with migration background, MSM without gay identity as well as sexually very active MSM. The percentage of recently tested participants is in all sub-groups significantly higher in all subgroups in the second survey compared to the baseline survey. The grade of campaign usage has the same significant effect.

The intention to get tested on HIV within the next three month also increased significantly between baseline and evaluation survey. Before the start of the campaign about 43 % of the baseline participants stated their intention to get tested on HIV within the next six month, whereas about 53% of the campaign users in the second survey stated this. The intention on STI-testing is growing in this period, too - but not that significantly (56 % to 60 %) (tb.3).

	baseline-survey	evaluation survey (campaign user)	p
N	5,149	5,767	
HIV-test intention	42,6 %	52,5 %	<,001
N	5,138	5,809	
STI-test intention	56,4 %	60,1 %	<,001

Table 3: Indicator HIV- and STI- test intention, pre-post-comparison (basis: all HIV-negative and untested participants)

The HIV test intention is also rising significantly with the intensity of the campaign usage: 40 % of the non-users want to get tested on HIV within the next six month, 50 % of the average users report their intention and 56 % of the intensive campaign users. (tb.4).

	non campaign users	average campaign users	intense campaign users	p
N	13,583	3,167	2,600	
HIV-test intention	40,4 %	49,5 %	56,3 %	<,001
N	13,716	3,190	2,619	
STI-test intention	50,8 %	55,6 %	65,6 %	<,001

Table 4: Indicator HIV- and STI- test intention, comparison of usage intensity (basis: all HIV-negative and untested participants)

The difference of the STI testing intention is significantly higher within the intense campaign users compared to average users and non users: 51 % of the non-users, 56 % of the average users and 66% of the intense users intend to get tested on STIs within the next 6 month (tb.4). This trend is also consistent in all subgroups. As well groups with an overall lower test intention (e.g. MSM without gay identity) as groups with a high test intention (e.g. sexually very active) benefit from using the campaign and claim more often to test on HIV or STIs within the next six month.

## Conclusion:

The results underline the importance of community based counselling and testing campaigns and programs for gay men and other MSM. Community based HIV- and STI- counselling and testing is an important complement to existing services in Germany. Nationwide testing campaigns are feasible and lower barriers against counselling and testing. Testing campaigns can be successful in all subgroups, especially in the so called "hard-to-reach" subgroups. Better communication is needed to highlight awareness and importance of regular STI screening for men with high risk contacts.



Contact:  
Matthias Kuske  
Campaign manager ICH WEISS WAS ICH TU  
Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe e.V.  
Wilhelmstr. 138, 10963 Berlin  
[matthias.kuske@dah.aidshilfe.de](mailto:matthias.kuske@dah.aidshilfe.de)

[aidshilfe.de](http://aidshilfe.de)

1) Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe e.V.  
2) Freie Universität Berlin, Department of Public Health