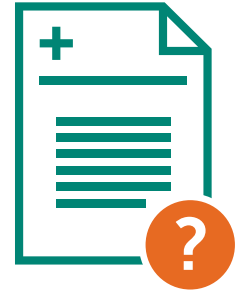




Distributing HIV Self-Testing Kits to Male Partners in Eswatini

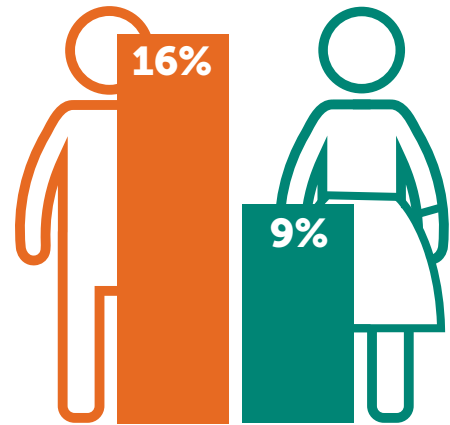
Globally, in 2019, **19% of HIV-infected individuals remained unaware** of their HIV status.



MEN ARE CONSISTENTLY LESS LIKELY TO EVER TEST FOR HIV COMPARED TO WOMEN. In 2019, about 16% of men living with HIV (aged 15 years and above) in Eastern and Southern Africa did not know their HIV status compared to 9% of women living with HIV of the same age.



Distribution of HIV self-testing (HIVST) kits to ANC women to share with their male partners is a promising strategy for reaching men for HIV testing



EGPAF designed a qualitative, exploratory study using semi-structured in-depth interviews with conveniently selected ANC women, men and health care providers in six public health facilities from both urban and rural areas in Hhohho and Shiselweni regions in Eswatini.



ALL 26 ANC WOMEN who had received an HIVST kit during a previous clinic visit **REPORTED SHARING THE HIVST KITS WITH MALE PARTNERS**; 21 reported their partner used the kit.

Almost all women accepted use of the HIVST and **MOST MALE PARTNERS** who took the test **APPRECIATED THE EASE**.

NO WOMEN INTERVIEWED FOR THE STUDY REPORTED INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV) due to delivering HIVST kits to male partners, except for one incident of IPV reported by a health care provider where a woman was made to leave the home for delivering the kit.



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WOMEN WHO WERE LESS KEEN ON RECEIVING HIVST KITS FROM HEALTH WORKERS FEARED possible negative reactions by male partners, including quarreling, physical violence, verbal abuse, or being kicked out of their homes; and **WERE LESS CONFIDENT** about whether their partner would accept the test kit, and a few overtly said their partner would refuse the kit, or would not agree to test in their presence.



CHALLENGES PRESENTED:

? Women’s understanding of how to use it and an inability to be sure women conveyed correct usage instructions.



Few men returned for confirmatory testing.

RECOMMENDATIONS MOVING FORWARD:



Vast majority of informants recommended a national strategy and scale up effort alongside educating or counseling men about the self-test kits before women introduce the kits.



Some men suggested the use of special functions—such as soccer tournaments preceded by testing or occasions providing refreshments, gifts, or money—to reach men about HIVST



Strengthening the support provided to health care providers in counseling their ANC women and in providing information about HIVST kits and how to use them.



Predominant negative conceptualizations of masculinities and the gender stereotypes should be addressed by designing a health communication strategy to accompany the scale-up of women-delivered HIVST kits to male partners.