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# Rapid HIV Testing in Community Pharmacies is feasible and identifies individuals with characteristics different than those tested in healthcare venues.

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## Abstract

Expansion of nontraditional health care settings allows for routinization of HIV testing, counseling, and linkage, of patients who are not otherwise in care. The purpose of this study was to demonstrate the feasibility of implementing a rapid HIV testing program in community pharmacies and compare data with patients tested in an emergency department over the same time period. A prospective cross-sectional study was conducted on a convenience sample of clients at five community pharmacies. Demographics and HIV risk factors were collected. The main outcome measures were number of clients tested, identified HIV infections, and participant satisfaction. In 294 days of pharmacy testing, 2,805 customers were eligible to receive testing, and 2,030 individuals agreed to test. In pharmacies the average age was 33 ± 15 years, 41% were male, 59% were Hispanic, 77% had been previously tested for HIV, and 34% were uninsured. HIV incidence was 0.3%. In the ED, 30,747 patients were approached for testing. The average age was 35 ± 14, 41% were male, 56% Hispanic and 81% had been previously tested for HIV. HIV incidence was 0.3%. Pharmacy clients who tested positive for HIV had higher CD4 counts individuals diagnosed through the ED. A larger percentage of clients reported engaging in risky sexual behavior. Implementing a rapid HIV testing program is feasible and acceptable to pharmacy patrons. Expansion of HIV screening initiatives into pharmacies can increase access to testing and identify individuals with unique risk factor characteristics.

**Biography**

Yvette Calderon, MD, MS, is a Professor Clinical Emergency Medicine and Associate Dean of Diversity Enhancement at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. She is also the Director of Urgent Care at Jacobi Medical Center (JMC). She is the PI of Project BRIEF, a rapid point of care HIV testing, counseling, and linkage service at the JMC ED. Project BRIEF has tested over 85,000 patients in the Bronx with a linkage rate of 85%. Dr. Calderon has dedicated her career to working with disadvantaged patient populations.