How to Choose the Right Test

There are a variety of choices for Point of Care (POC) testing out on the market today. Product positioning by manufacturers can cause confusion on which test to use. Make sure that it fits your current and future needs.

Look to lab staff you trust, not sales reps. Look at how much HIV you find, clinic flow, budget level, QA, and other factors. Match your testing to your population. If you have high HIV rates, use the most sensitive rapid tests. Work with your lab and site coordinators to see what is going to be the best fit for their site.

Using Change Management Tools to Reach Your Goal

Staff had concerns about the read time, the additional blood, and whether clients will decline testing because of these issues. Clients we spoke to were less concerned about these issues.

We heard and acknowledged concerns, over communicated about the change, kept everyone updated on our timelines. We acknowledged to ourselves that some staff will have trouble with these changes. We kept bringing the conversation back to with providers that it is “better for clients, better public health, better prevention.”

Seeing the Big Picture

Right from the start we had false positives similar to others sites across the country. We had to step back and see if that was the technology or operators.

We “investigated” and found “over reading”, operators were calling lines with no color (ghost lines). Retrained staff and made sure new staff got the correct instruction on how to read.

Training on How to Read Test

The visual interpretation is a bit different than any other POC test, all other you call if you see anything at all in the test area as a reactive. We have been training operators on “A line is a line is a line.” Determine is different, lines need to have red/pink color. We had false positives when first rolled out, due to operators “over reading.”

When training we are very clear that this test reads differently than other tests. A line must have red or pink color to it. Therefore if line is grey it is not reactive. False positives decreased greatly.

Balance Lab Needs with Client/Provider Needs

When trying to define window period, staff and clients want us to be 100% confident that no reactive test would be missed. Clients desire the shortest possible window period to help reduce their anxiety. This continues to be the tension between the “lab world” and “client/provider world.”

When crafting a counseling message around window period, balancing data with needs of client comes into play. This has led to many conversations with our local lab, clinical expertise, and test counselors. We looked at all research available at the time, which was limited.

Summary

We looked at this process as a ‘feasibility study’ and found it was very feasible for lay users to use outside the lab. This increases our capacity to stop the spread of HIV at an earlier stage than other POC test.

SFDPH is funded to do capacity building and provide technical assistance. If you would like assistance with rolling out Determine in your jurisdiction feel free to contact us.

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