

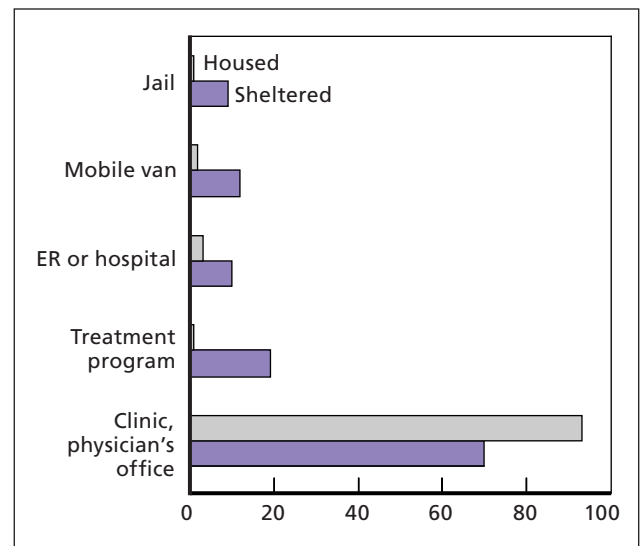
HIV Testing Among Indigent Women

Who Gets Tested?

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- AIDS is currently among the ten leading causes of death for women of reproductive age and the leading cause of death for African American women between the ages of 25 and 34, according to the Centers for Disease Control, which advocates recommending and routinely providing testing and counseling in settings frequented by at-risk clients.
- Among a random sample of 460 homeless (sheltered) women and 438 women living in low-income housing (housed women) in Los Angeles County, 83 percent reported that they had been tested for HIV at least once: 88 percent of sheltered women versus 80 percent of housed women.
- As the figure shows, most women were tested at a clinic or a physician's office, but sheltered women were more likely than housed women to have been tested at other sites.
- Testing was more likely among women who were younger, those who were living with a minor child, those who had a regular source of health care, those who were alcohol or drug dependent, those who had ever experienced sexual violence, and those who were at low risk for mental health problems.
- Few women cited lack of money, transportation, or access to testing facilities as primary barriers to being tested. Instead, they cited lack of belief that they were at risk as the primary barrier.
- The high rate of testing among the women studied emphasizes the importance of offering testing in a variety of settings frequented by at-risk clients for early detection and treatment.
- In spite of the high rate of testing, efforts to encourage testing among some groups may be needed. These groups include women who may not perceive they are at risk, housed women who lack a regular source of health care, women at high risk for mental health problems, and older women, particularly in light of the aging of the population.

Where Do Indigent Women Get HIV Testing?



This fact sheet is based on Tucker JS, Wenzel SL, Elliott MN, Hambarsoomian K, and Golinelli D, "Patterns and Correlates of HIV Testing Among Sheltered and Low-Income Housed Women in Los Angeles County," *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome*, Vol. 34, No. 4, December 1, 2001, pp. 415-422.

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