



# Can female sex workers encourage their peers to take a HIV self-test?

Effectiveness of a peer-based approach in improving HIV self-testing among female sex workers in Delta State, Nigeria

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## Background

Female Sex Workers (FSWs) face barriers in accessing facility-based HIV services due to the stigma, discrimination, inconvenient location and opening hours of the healthcare facilities. Hence they are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS.

WHO recommends quarterly HIV self-testing (HIVST) by FSWs.

Unfortunately, many FSWs in sub-Saharan Africa have not met that standard.

HIVST, therefore, surmounts these barriers by allowing testing at home, and at any time.

## Aim

To determine if peer-based approach would be an effective service delivery strategy to improve HIVST among FSWs in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria.

## Methods

The study would be of the prospective cohort design. Key informants and the snowballing technique would be used to identify FSWs within the study location. The identified FSWs would be trained to become peer mobilizers (PMs) and incentivized to mobilize other FSWs. A cross-sectional survey would be administered to assess the baseline HIV testing rates of the FSWs. The PMs would distribute the HIVST kits to their peers and the testing rate assessed after 3 months.

Descriptive statistics, thematic content analysis and cost-benefit assessment would be used for data analysis.

## Expected Outcomes

**Primary Outcomes:** Any HIV testing following the PMs' visits, measured at 1 month and 4 months.

**Secondary Outcomes:** Improved use of the HIV self-test kit

Increased willingness to seek HIV-related medical care, treatment initiation following a positive test result

