

GP practices should offer opportunistic sexual health testing, study finds

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GPs should offer opportunistic sexual health testing to young patients attending routine appointments, researchers recommend.

A study published today in the [BJGP](#) found that young people aged 16-24 preferred being offered a test to asking for one. It also found young people prefer having the test in their GP practice, rather than at a sexual health clinic.

The patients were interviewed about their views either before or after a routine appointment where they were offered an HIV test, as well as chlamydia testing, contraception advice and free condoms – also known as ‘3Cs’.

The researchers, from the Gloucester Royal Hospital, found that 'participants displayed a clear preference for 3Cs and HIV to be offered at the GP practice over other sexual health service providers' and 'highlighted convenience of the practice, assurance of confidentiality, and that the sexual health discussion was appropriate and routine'.

The study also noted that there was a lack of awareness among young people of the sexual health services available in their GP practice, and a general lack of knowledge about sexual health.

The authors said this could be improved by offering more comprehensive tests at GP surgeries and providing more information during consultations, for example making clear that patients can choose a male or female clinician, how samples are taken and providing reassurance about results.

The paper concluded: 'General practice staff should facilitate patients' preferences by ensuring that 3Cs and HIV testing services are made available at their surgery and offered to appropriate patients in a non-judgemental way.'

But the findings come as financially challenged local authorities are widely [cutting funding for sexual health services in GP practices around England](#), as previously revealed by a Pulse investigation.



<http://www.pulsetoday.co.uk/clinical/more-clinical-areas/sexual-health/gp-practices-should-offer-opportunistic-sexual-health-testing-study-finds/20034490.article>