Mailing free home HIV tests helps detect more infections

November 18 2019, by Lindsey Tanner

In this June 27, 2012 file photo, a patient uses an oral test for HIV, inside the HIV Testing Room at the Penn Branch of the District of Columbia Department of Motor Vehicles, in southeast Washington. Free mail-order HIV tests for high-risk men offer a potentially better strategy for curbing disease spread than usual care, according to a U.S. government study published Monday, Nov. 18, 2019, in *JAMA Internal Medicine*, that resulted in many more infections detected - including among friends with whom recipients shared extra kits. (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin, File)

Mailing free home HIV tests to high-risk men offers a potentially better strategy for detecting infections than usual care.

That's according to a U.S. government study that resulted in many more infections found—including among friends with whom recipients shared extra kits.

The yearlong experiment recruited 2,600 men from online social network and music sites. Those who signed up were sent four free test kits but could order more. Many did and shared them.

Overall, 25 infections were detected in the self-testing group, versus 11 in men who just got links to local services. Even more infections—34—were detected among friends of those who shared tests.

Over 70% of participants who learned of positive results sought treatment.

The study was published Monday in *JAMA Internal Medicine*.

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