

HIV testing in abortion services

We read with interest the commentary by Sylvia Bates and the article by Briggs *et al.* regarding HIV testing in abortion services in the October 2011 issue of this Journal.^{1,2} In particular we note the statement about the lack of data in this area. We have recently conducted an audit of this topic in our integrated sexual health service.

A total of 150 case notes of patients attending for pregnancy counselling prior to potential referral for a termination of pregnancy were analysed. Analysis was related to the offer of an HIV test, acceptance of the test and the reasons for declining the test. Overall 102/150 (68%) were offered the test and 21/102 (21%) accepted testing. Of the 81/102 who declined testing, 33 had recorded reasons in their notes for declining the test. Eight of these 33 patients stated that they had had the test elsewhere, in 6/33 cases patients stated they preferred testing at the end of the incubation period and in 11/33 cases patients stated they were tested as part of a recent antenatal screen.

The offer of HIV testing and uptake fall short of British HIV Association standards.³ As a result of this audit standards have been reiterated to staff. The offer of testing can be drilled down to individual clinicians; this can be monitored on an ongoing basis. Also offering the test on an opt-out basis is being considered. We plan to re-audit the topic in the near future.

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References

- 1 **Bates SM.** HIV testing in abortion clinics. *J Fam Plann Reprod Health Care* 2011;**37**:198–200.
- 2 **Briggs A**, Partridge DG, Bates S. HIV testing in colposcopy and termination of pregnancy services: a missed opportunity? *J Fam Plann Reprod Health Care* 2011;**37**:201–203.
- 3 **British HIV Association.** *UK National Guidelines for HIV Testing*. 2008. <http://www.bhiva.org/documents/Guidelines/Testing/GlinesHIVTest08.pdf> [accessed 24 January 2012].