



By offering results in less than 15 minutes, rapid HIV testing has become increasingly newsworthy in recent years. Health Canada issues the first rapid HIV testing kit in March 2000, which was subsequently withdrawn from the market in 2002 due to concerns about its accuracy. The rapid test uses a finger prick drop of blood and the result is given to the patient after 15-20 minutes. It should be noted that these kits are not home test kits. They are intended for use under the supervision of a health care professional. The test may yield a false positive result (indicating an HIV infection when the person is not infected). Because of this, all positive results need to be confirmed by an approved HIV testing laboratory.

#### **BENEFITS**

- Clients receive results sooner – results can be returned within minutes.
- Tests are easier to administer – tests just require a drop of blood.
- More people receive their results – because clients do not have to return, more people will get their results.
- Acceptance of HIV testing could be increased.

#### **CONCERNS**

- People who take a rapid test might not receive adequate counseling.
- Clients need to be made aware that a positive result requires confirmation from an approved testing laboratory.
- False positive results are not uncommon.
- People administering the tests might not be sufficiently trained to protect client confidentiality.

#### **REFERENCES**

1. Health Canada. 2002. Available at [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/advisories-avis/2002/2002\\_31\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/advisories-avis/2002/2002_31_e.html). Accessed on Nov. 15, 2007
2. Elliot, R. Rapid HIV Screening at the Point of Care: Legal and Ethical Questions. *Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network*. 2000.