

HIV self-testing as an entry point to PrEP services in Nigeria

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Background

- HIV self-testing (HIVST) has the potential to expand access to and uptake of HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).
- In November 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended HIVST as an approach that could simplify and support PrEP initiation and delivery.
- In Nigeria, PrEP is initiated following facility HIV testing services (HTS), and is coupled with repeat testing to identify breakthrough HIV infections before PrEP refills.
- Frequent facility visits combined with long waiting times have been identified as some of the barriers to the uptake of PrEP services in Nigeria.
- To address these barriers, the HIV Self-Testing (STAR) project Nigeria, through its catalytic support, analyzed the impact of using HIVST to enhance PrEP uptake among the general and key populations.

Description

HIVST Distribution & Outcome

Clients were provided with HIVST kits and those who were non-reactive received additional laboratory investigations, including HTS prior to PrEP initiation.

Eligibility & Initiation

PrEP was provided for eligible individuals from both the general and key populations. At enrollment, eligible clients received counselling on the benefits of immediate enrollment for PrEP.

Duration

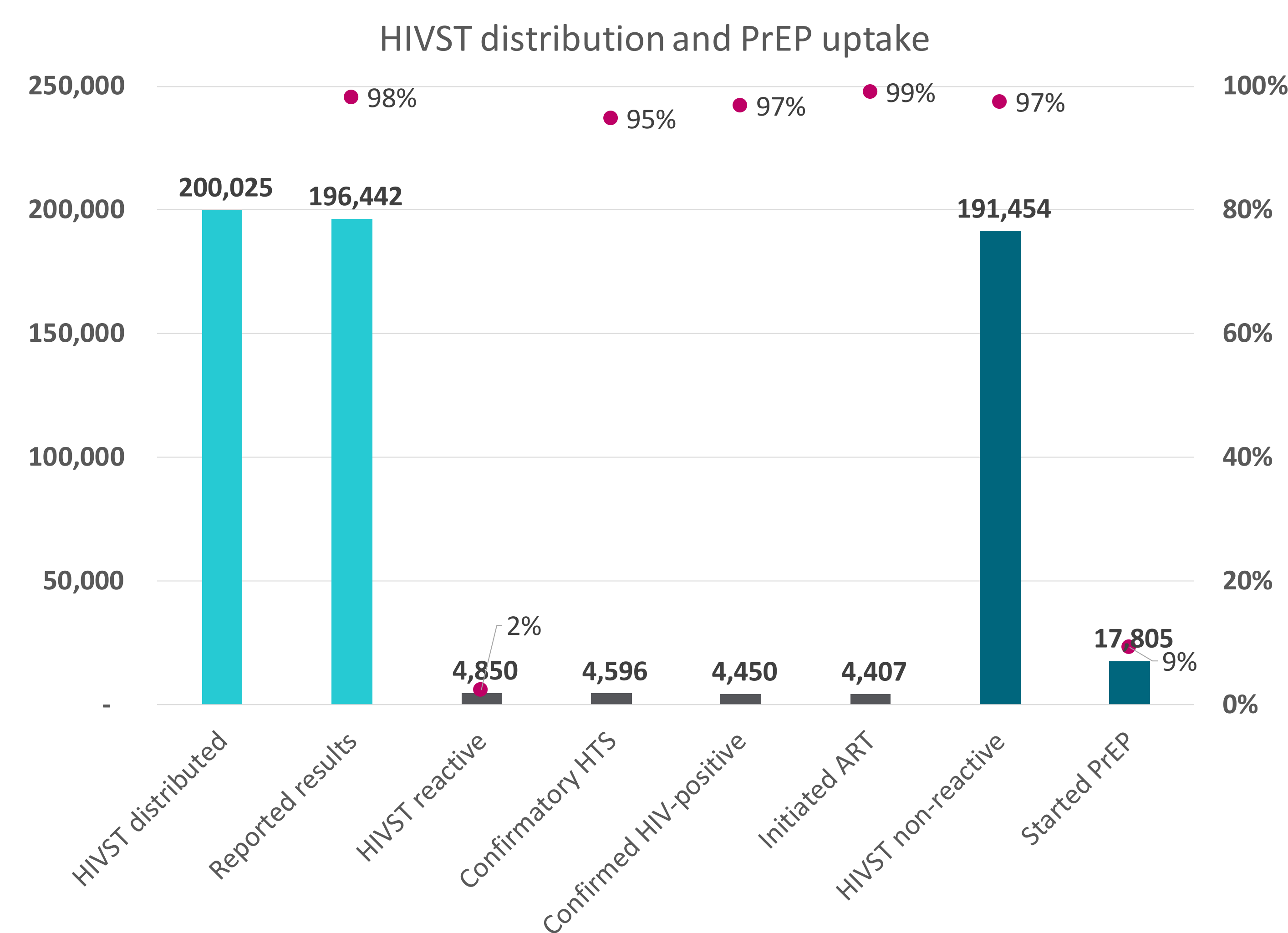
PrEP (combination of 300 mg of tenofovir and 300 mg of lamivudine once daily) was dispensed for 3 months. PrEP was stopped once the discontinuation criteria was met or at client's will.

Documentation & Reporting

Relevant demographic, clinical indicators, follow-up, and refills were recorded in HIVST and PrEP registers.

Results

- Between January 2021 and October 2022, a total of 200,025 HIVST kits were distributed across 14 states through 4 models (facility, key population one-stop shops, community, and private sector).
- A total of 17,805 (9.3%) of those who were HIVST non-reactive were started on PrEP following additional laboratory investigations, including confirmatory HTS.



Conclusion

HIVST is effective entry point to promote and expand access to PrEP. It can also be an effective approach to de-medicalize biomedical HIV prevention and PrEP delivery in Nigeria.

