

# Index Testing Strategy Optimizes HIV Case Finding among Men in Five Nigerian States, Moving Country Closer to Epidemic Control

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## Background

Nigeria accounts for 9% of the global HIV burden, with about 10% of new HIV cases occurring in the country. The National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) states that only 60% of men 15 years and older living with HIV are currently on HIV treatment. Studies show that men and boys are less likely than their female counterparts to test for HIV, initiate antiretroviral therapy and remain engaged in care. Structural barriers, such as clinic operating hours or locations that are inconvenient for men who work, and the direct or indirect opportunity costs of obtaining services, such as time lost from work, prevent men from accessing HIV services. Due to these factors, it is more difficult to identify men with HIV relative to women. The USAID-funded Reaching Impact, Saturation, and Epidemic Control (RISE) project implemented Index Testing (IT) as a strategy to increase HIV case identification among men through their sexual partners.

## Results

- Before intensified index testing, 3,245 men aged > 15 years were tested through the index modality and 480 had a positive result (yield-15%, contribution-18%).
- Similarly, 68,562 men received HIV testing through other modalities and 2,212 had a positive test result (3% yield and 82% contribution).
- Following implementation of intensified index testing, 6,418 men were tested, and 1,157 HIV-infected men were identified (18% yield and 28% contribution) while other modalities tested 91,056 and identified 2,974 HIV-infected men (3% yield and 72% contribution).
- Results from the two modalities showed 141% for index testing and 34% increase for other modalities in case identification between the two periods, respectively.

## Methods

A comparison of data on index testing from October 2019–March 2020 (before) versus April–September 2020 after health care providers' training, routine data reviews, and remediation were used to intensify index testing. Registers were reviewed to assess the number of HIV tests and HIV-positive clients identified from both modalities to determine their yield and contribution for both periods.



Figure 1: Routine Data Review Meeting and Providers' Training

Percentage Increase in HIV-infected Men > 15 years Identified Across Both Modalities

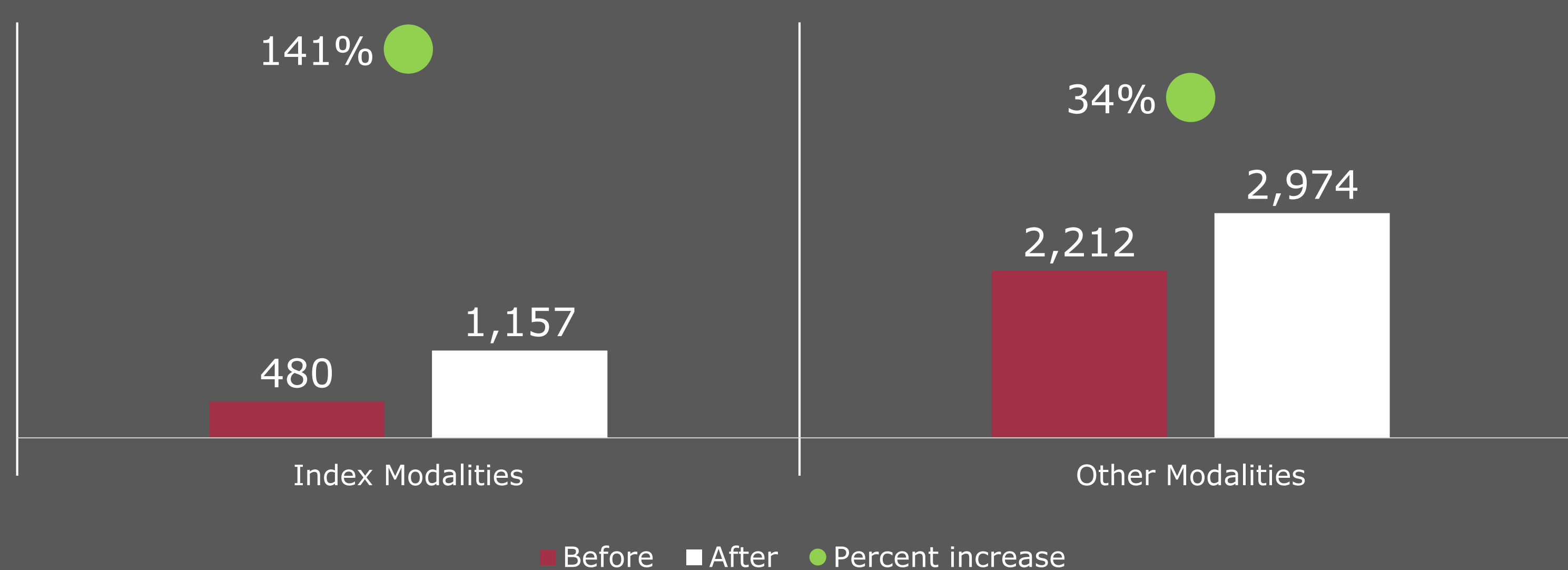


Chart 1: Comparison between Proportion of Men Identified using Index Strategy and other Testing Strategies

## Conclusion

Strengthening providers' capacity on index testing and routine data reviews and remediation has been found to be an effective strategy for HIV case finding among men, which is critical in achieving epidemic control.