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HIV Testing Among Women in the United States

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Background/Objective: In every region of the world, more women are living with HIV/AIDS. The rising proportion of HIV cases among women underscores the need to understand the HIV testing behavior among women. The purpose of this study was to determine the proportion of women aged 18 years and older who had ever been tested for HIV in the United States and assess the factors associated with seeking the HIV test. **Method:** Data from the 2005 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) were analyzed. **Results:** Of the 16,838 women, who were interviewed in 2005, 75.8 percent were white, 46.7 percent were married, and 37.4 percent lived in the South. Of these women, 39 percent (n= 6,496) reported to have had been tested for HIV. After fitting these factors in the logistic regression model, African American (Odds Ratio (OR):2.24, 95 percent confidence interval (CI) 1.937-2.585) and Hispanic women (OR:1.27; 95% CI: 1.039-1.558), being pregnant (OR: 3.81, 95% CI: 2.734-5.301), or having a history of sexually transmitted diseases (OR: 4.66, 95% CI: 3.110-6.980) were significantly associated with HIV testing; whereas living in the Midwest (OR: 0.72, 95% CI: 0.625-0.826) was not associated with HIV testing. **Conclusion:** About 27 years into the HIV epidemic, only 39% of women aged 18 years and older had ever been tested for HIV in the United States. Considering the rising number of HIV cases in this population, more efforts are needed to increase the proportion of women who become aware of their HIV serostatus in order to link those who are infected to health services.

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