

# Expanding youth-friendly HIV self-testing services during COVID: a qualitative analysis of a crowdsourcing contest in Nigeria

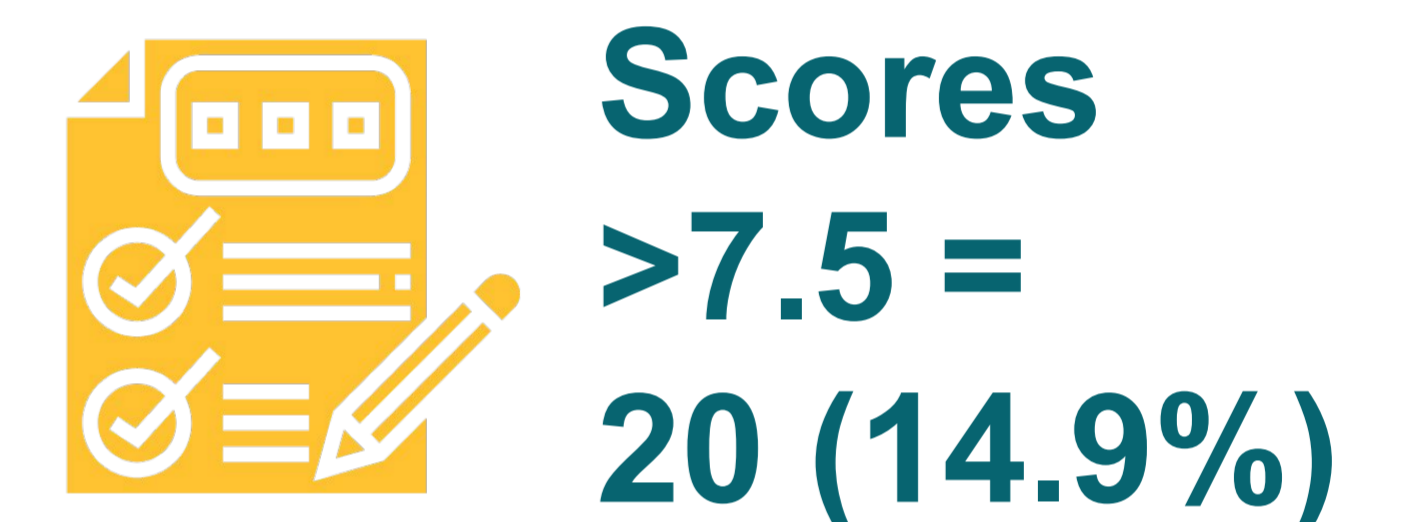
Oliver Ezechi MD<sup>1</sup>, Joseph D. Tucker MD<sup>2</sup>, Alexis Engelhart BS<sup>3</sup>, Onyekachukwu Anikamadu BA<sup>3</sup>, Ucheoma Nwaozuru PhD<sup>3</sup>, Chisom Obiezu-Umeh MPH<sup>3</sup>, Titilola Gbajabiamila MBBS<sup>1</sup>, David Oladele MBBS<sup>1</sup>, Adesola Z. Musa PhD<sup>1</sup>, Stacey Mason MPH<sup>3</sup>, Juliet Iwelunmor PhD<sup>3</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Nigerian Institute of Medical Research, <sup>2</sup>University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <sup>3</sup>Saint Louis University

## Background

- **HIV self-testing (HIVST)** among youth is an **effective** and **confidential** approach to enhance uptake.
- However, optimal **strategies** for **delivering HIVST** are **limited**, and the **COVID-19 pandemic** has **disrupted facility-based HIV testing services**.
- This qualitative study aimed to find **common themes** in a **virtual World AIDS Day (WAD) crowdsourcing open call** for youth responses on **how to promote HIV self-testing among young people in Nigeria during COVID-19 measures**.

## Results

Of the **156 submitted entries**, there were **134 eligible submissions (N = 134)**.



Three prominent themes were identified from the open call submissions to promote HIVST through:



Digital approaches (such as gamification and photo-verification system) to decentralize testing beyond facility-based sites while adhering to COVID-19 safety measures

*"Bambam is an interactive health app for youths to access their health status especially reproductive and sexual status and most importantly monitor their HIV status. Using bambam comes with lots of value added advantages, such as free health bies including free medical consultancy and tests, and free vouchers and gift items. Points can be gained and acquired on bambam and points converted to freebies. BamBam Game has a leaderboard rating system to encourage competition between peers."*



Community leaders and social influencers (such as religious and youth leaders) to build trust in HIV testing services

*"To aid the sensitization process, religious leaders can be mobilized to help de-stigmatize the disease by preaching love and tolerance. They should encourage their followers to engage in regular check-ups, use prophylactics in situations where they cannot abstain or better flee from all forms of unsafe sex."*



Mobile service delivery through existing infrastructures/platforms (such as mobile health clinics, churches, schools, and health facilities) to sustain HIVST service delivery post-COVID-19 era

*"E-commerce: Allows users to order for their kit from any of our local distributor which would be delivered by an anonymous courier at the door step within 24 hours. Local distributors can also order bulk for restocking. Local distributor gets commissioned monthly on all purchase made through him/her."*

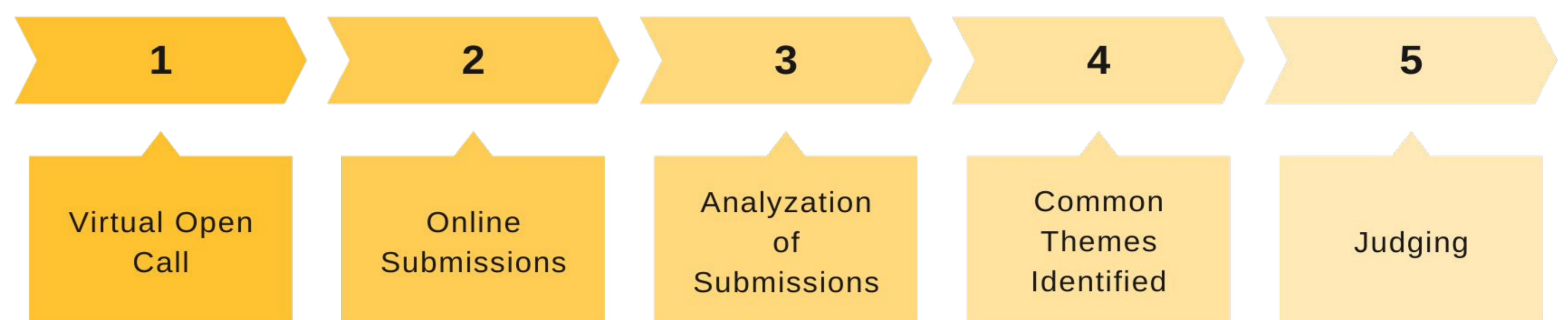
## Methods

**Setting:** Nigeria

**Participants:** Nigerian youth aged 10-24 years old

**Idea submission ways:** Google form or email

**Open call question:** "How will you promote HIV self-testing among young people during COVID-19 measures?"



Judging Criteria (on a 9-point scale: 1-9 with nine as highest)		
Desirability	Feasibility	Impact
Concept is appealing to young people and is affordable, accessible, and confidential.	Concept is practical in terms of implementation and resource availability.	Concept has the ability to influence young people to self-test for HIV, and can reach young people in Nigeria.

## Conclusion

- The open call engaged a large, diverse number of youth through virtual connections.
- The open call participants proposed a variety of approaches and ideas to improve the uptake of HIVST for the HIV susceptible youth in Nigeria both during COVID-19 and in the post-COVID-19 era.

**Acknowledgments:** This research was supported by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) under the award number UG3HD096929.



THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA at CHAPEL HILL

