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Background

- HIV in Mexico disproportionately affects MSM with HIV prevalence of 20.7% and only 39.8% diagnosed.¹
- In May 2018, the Mexican Government included HIV self-testing (HIVST) as part of the differentiated screening strategies to increase people's access to HIV testing. However, HIVST remains unavailable in Mexico.
- To illustrate the importance of Mexico remaining committed to HIVST, we conducted a study to describe the Mexican MSM demand for HIVST and estimate its potential public health impacts.

Methods

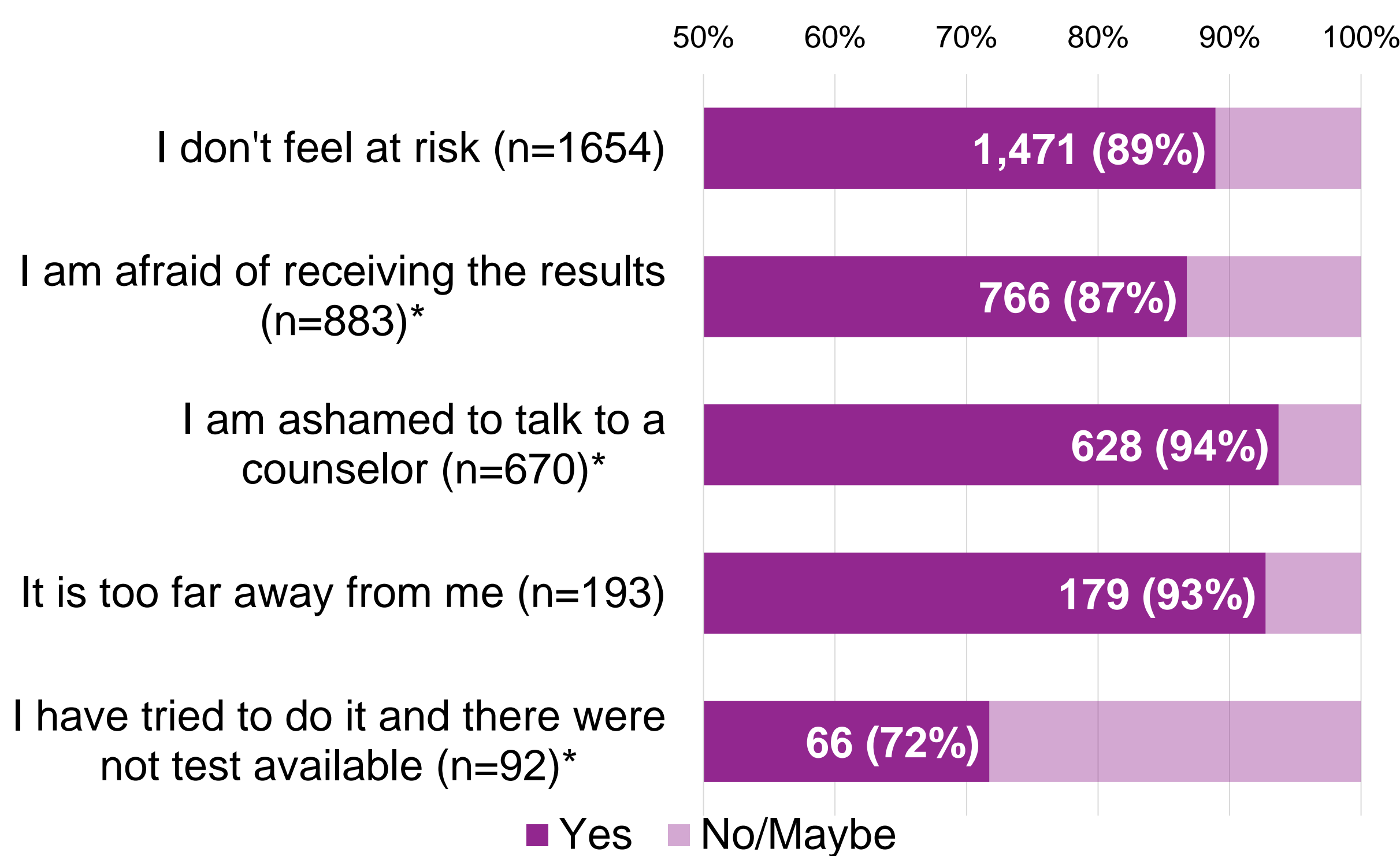
- We performed a secondary data analysis of the Encuesta de Sexo entre Hombres (ESEH) study, an online sexual health survey of adult Mexican MSM recruited in 2017.
 - Analysis was restricted to those participants who did not report a previous HIV diagnosis. They were asked about their willingness to buy an HIVST from a pharmacy.
- Q: If there were rapid tests for HIV detection through saliva available for sale in pharmacies, would you be willing to buy them?**
- Multivariable logistic regression assessed demographic and behavioral factors associated with willingness to buy an HIVST (yes versus no/maybe).
 - To estimate the impact of HIVST, we assumed that the prevalence of MSM who had never been tested and the prevalence of MSM in Community Detection Center (5.8%) are similar. The analysis was based on UNAIDS's estimates of undiagnosed PLWH in Mexico and a 1.2 million MSM population.^{1,2}

Results

Sample characteristics

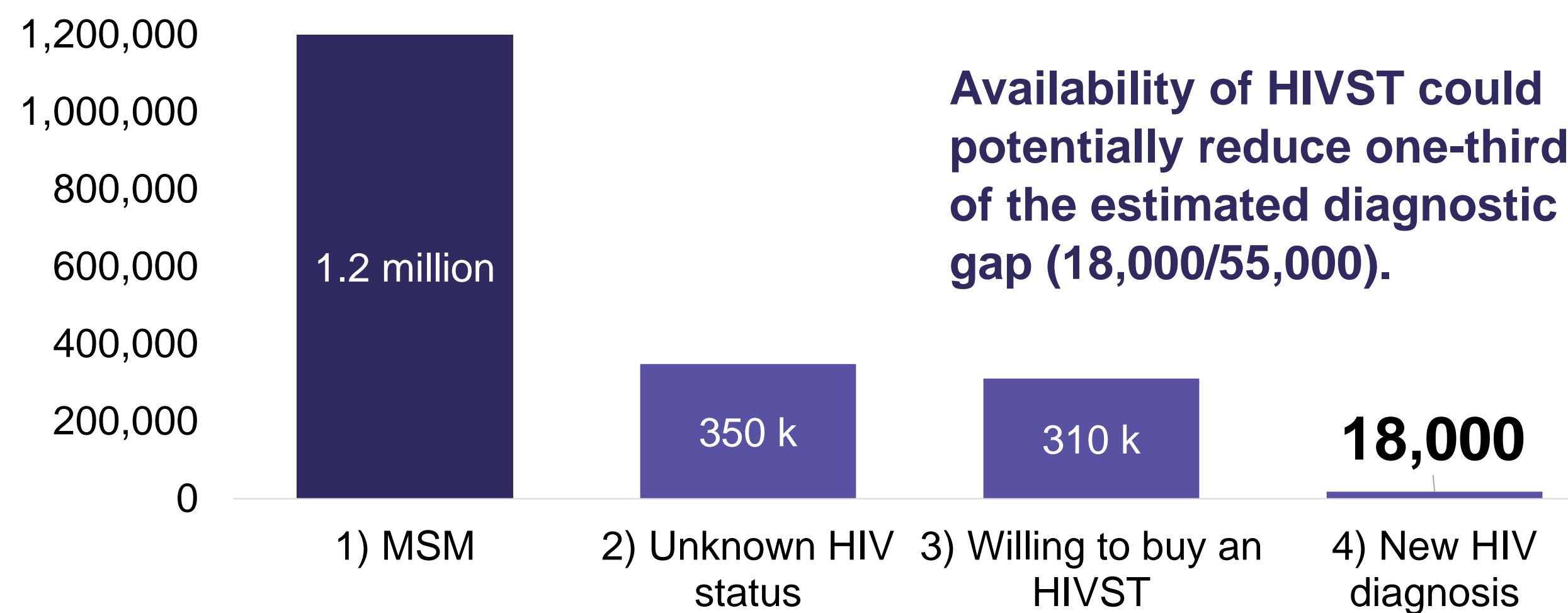
- 11,183 MSM participants
- Median age: 26 years old (IQR: 22-31)
- Median # of sex partners in the past 12 months: 4 (IQR: 2-10)
- 74% of participants had at least an associate or bachelor's degree
- 34.5% (3,858/11,183) had never been HIV tested
- 21.9% (2,453/11,183) were tested >12 month prior.

Willingness to buy a HIVST kit in pharmacies if available by reason for not HIV testing



- 89% of participants who responded not feeling at risk would still buy an HIVST kit if available
- The higher percentage of willingness was among MSM that referred feeling ashamed to talk to a counselor (94%)

Estimated impact of HIVST among MSM who have never been tested



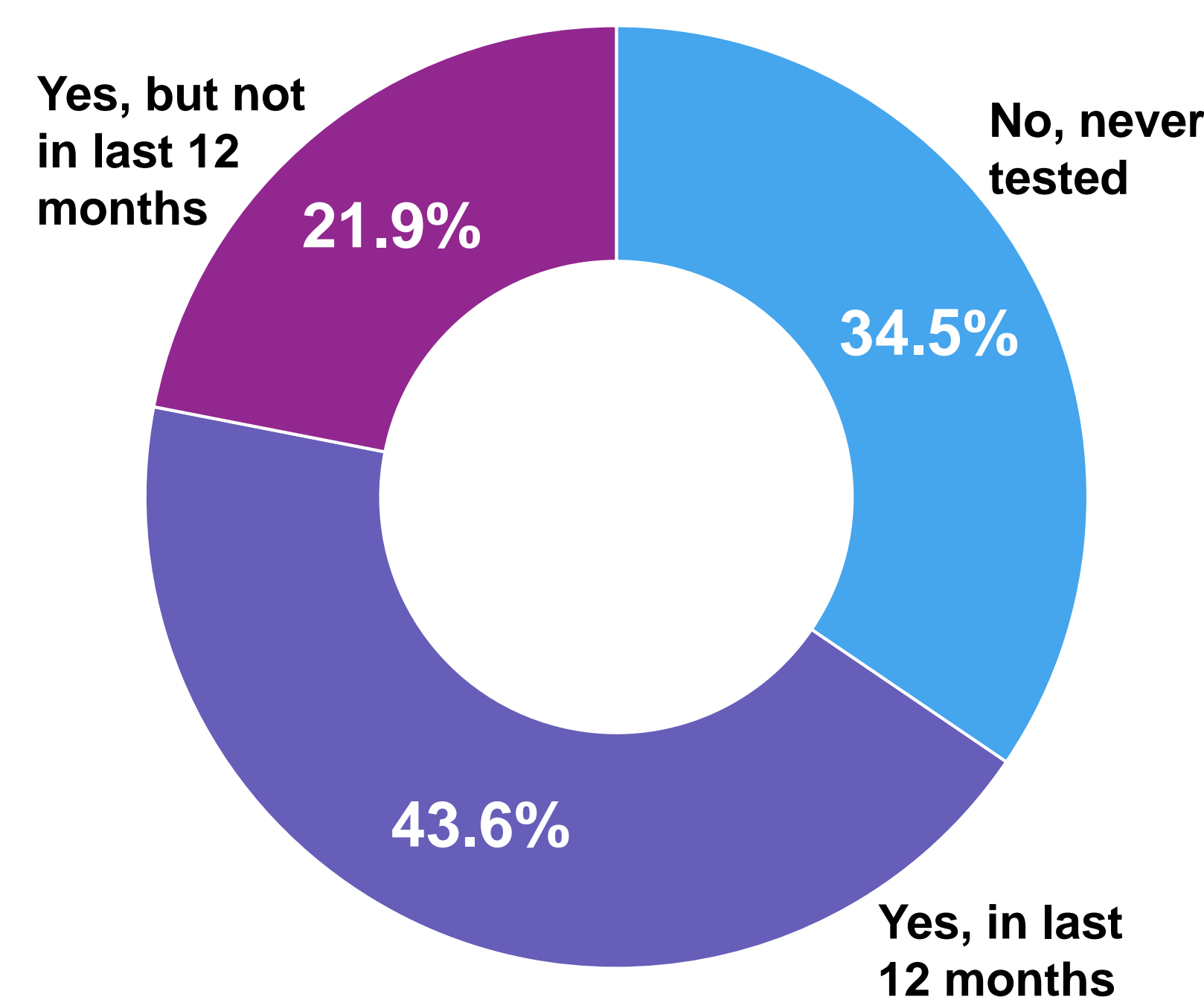
1) Proportion of the population of adult men who have sex with men use in Mexico: 3%. 2) MSM 20 to 69 yo = 1,010,000 x 34.5% 3) Among those who have never been screened for HIV (89.2%). 4) HIV prevalence of Community Detection Centers (5.8%)

Conclusions

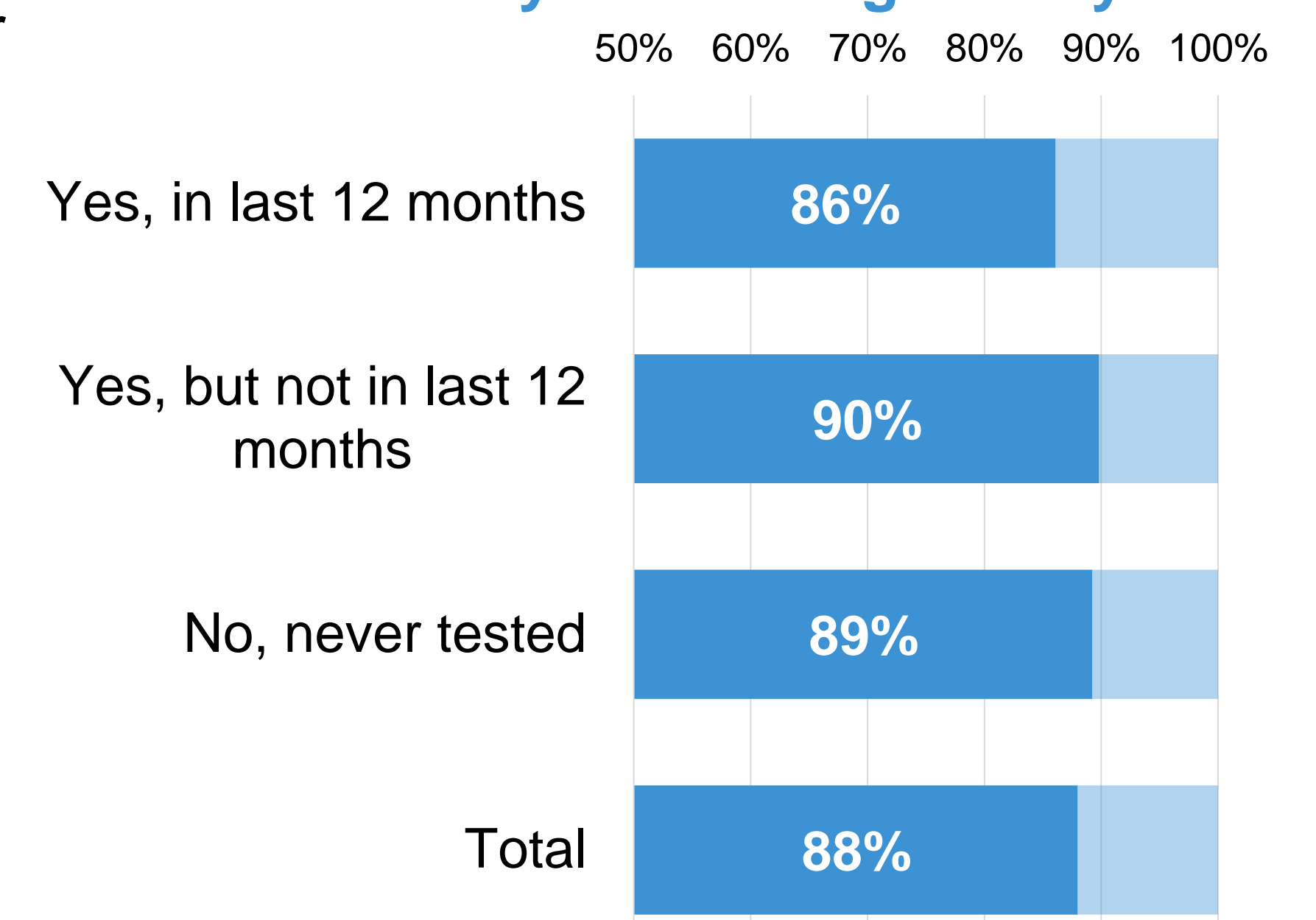
- Mexican MSM demand for HIVST is exceptionally high, even if HIVST must be bought from a pharmacy, especially among MSM who have never or inconsistently tested or who have experienced barriers in the past. This high demand emphasizes that Mexico's implementation of HIVST policy is very likely to have substantial population-level effects on HIV prevention and care of Mexican MSM.
- Access to HIV testing decreased 60% in 2020 as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.³ Educational campaigns on the benefits of getting tested for HIV and access to HIVST in pharmacies could increase the frequency of HIV testing and the proportion of MSM aware of their HIV status.

88% of participants would buy an HIVST from a pharmacy (9,839/11,183)

Have you ever been tested for HIV?



Willingness to buy a rapid oral HIV test in pharmacies if available by HIV testing history



Factors associated with willingness to buy an HIVST kit from pharmacies if available

Factor	Yes	aOR	95% Cis
Have you ever been tested for HIV?*	Yes, in last 12 months	4194 (86.08)	1.0
	Yes, but not in last 12 months*	2203 (89.81)	1.4 1.2 - 1.7
	No, never tested*	3442 (89.22)	1.5 1.3 - 1.8
Do you think there is any benefit to getting tested for HIV?	No	52 (63.41)	1.0
	Yes*	9621 (88.44)	4.9 2.7 - 8.9
Number of sexual partners in the last 12 months	≤2	2954 (86.7)	1.0
	3 to 4	1750 (87.63)	1.0 0.8 - 1.2
	5 to 9	1974 (88.6)	1.1 0.9 - 1.4
	≥10*	2533 (89)	1.3 1.0 - 1.5
Have you ever avoided going to medical services because you are worried that someone might find out that you have sex with men?	No	7925 (87.69)	1.0
	Yes*	1549 (90.01)	1.2 1.0 - 1.5
Condomless anal sex in past 12 months	No	3062 (87.04)	1.0
	Yes	5206 (88.78)	1.1 0.9 - 1.3
Condom use in last anal sex	No	4739 (88.36)	1
	Yes	4732 (87.58)	0.9 0.8 - 1.1
Total	9839 (87.98)		

- Never tested and tested but not in the last 12 months were associated with willingness to buy an HIVST.
- MSM that perceived a benefit on getting an HIV test were 5 times more likely to be willing to buy an HIVST kit

Adjusted by: age, age of first oral and anal sex, education level, type of health insurance (public vs. private), recruitment source *p-value < 0.05