

# Optimising HIV case finding through the use of the box elicitation method for HIV index contacts elicitation in Gweru district of Zimbabwe, 2023

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## BACKGROUND

- Despite Zimbabwe’s progress towards achieving HIV epidemic control, HIV testing coverage among adults remains suboptimal (86%).
- Index case testing (ICT) is a targeted HIV testing approach supported by the government of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Health Interventions, and other stakeholders.
- ICT refers to the process where exposed contacts (sexual or biological) of a person living with HIV (index) are identified and offered HIV testing services.
- A major challenge in ICT is the low elicitation rates for sexual and biological contacts of index cases.
- We documented lessons learnt from using box elicitation for ICT in Gweru district from August 2022 to September 2023

## METHODS

- Box elicitation was implemented in the Gweru district between August 2022 and September 2023.
- Healthcare workers (HCWs) obtaining informed consent for contact elicitation from index clients, confidentiality was maintained.
- The index client wrote the names and contact details of all their sexual and biological contacts on a piece of paper with a unique identifier and dropped it in a confidentiality box.
- HCWs later contacted all persons listed by index cases for HIV testing.
- Index case elicitation data were recorded in program registers and the DHIS2 database and analysed using MS Excel.
- The assessment was covered by the Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe.

## RESULTS

The box elicitation innovation improved the index case testing contact elicitation ratio from an average of 1.5 per index case before intervention to above 2.0 throughout the box elicitation implementation period (August 2022 to August 2023), slightly dropping to 1.9 in September 2023 (Figure 1).

## DISCUSSION

- The box elicitation innovation enhanced index case contact elicitation ratio in Gweru district.
- The innovation addresses barriers to HIV testing and case-finding, such as privacy concerns, and stigma.
- Our findings align with other sub-Saharan studies that highlighted the importance of addressing issues with confidentiality in increasing contact elicitation rates.

## CONCLUSION

- Utilization of the box elicitation method improved index case contact elicitation ratios in Gweru district.
- We recommend scaling up the innovation to other regions facing challenges in HIV contact tracing.

## KEY WORDS

HIV case finding, Box elicitation method, Index contacts, ZHI, Zimbabwe

Figure 1: Elicitation ratio trend

