LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor – We agree with Drs Thomas and Cross that offering HIV testing in primary care to patients with indicator diseases is more likely to reduce late diagnoses, and this recommendation is in line with the recent NICE guidance.1,2 The main barrier is the medical practitioner, as many are unaware of situations in which HIV testing is recommended or feel uncomfortable and uneducated with respect to offering HIV testing. Blood borne viral testing for hepatitis B and C should be considered at the same time.

While the current testing guidelines constitute a significant change in clinical practice in the approach to HIV testing, it would only be successful in reducing undiagnosed infection and late diagnosis if the general clinical community and the population at risk embraced the recommendation and HIV testing is demystified.

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References
1 National Institute for Clinical Excellence. Increasing the update of HIV testing to reduce undiagnosed infection amongst men who have sex with men. Guidance.nice.org.uk/PH34 [Accessed February 2012].