An Online Audio Computer-Assisted Self-Interview for Pre-screening Prior to Rapid HIV Testing in a Vulnerable Population

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Abstract
ACASI (Audio Computer-Assisted Self-Interview) has been demonstrated to be more effective than face to face interviews in eliciting truthful responses on sensitive subjects such as substance abuse and sexual behavior (1, 2). Thus, ACASI has the potential to streamline and standardize HIV counseling and testing by providing a comprehensive overview of each patient’s behavior while highlighting areas that may merit further exploration.

Introduction
It is essential that counselors at HIV testing centers have a complete and accurate psychosocial profile on patients before HIV testing ensues. Unfortunately, efficient and effective counseling in community and clinical settings can be logistically difficult given issues related to health literacy and provider variability in counseling approaches.

"HARI" (HIV Assessment of Risk Inventory)
With support from Abbott Laboratories Inc., we created an ACASI-based closed online system that allows patients to answer questions delivered by voice via headphones and in writing on a computer screen in a private space within a community-based program providing HIV counseling and testing to gay and bisexual men of color (Table 1).

Conclusion
HIV counseling and testing require clear and effective protocols to ensure that patients receive the appropriate services. ACASI technology has been well-received by high-risk patients, and has the potential to streamline and standardize assessments while providing counselors with an easy to interpret patient overview prior to each counseling session. The program is now in the implementation phase and we will be reporting results in the near future.

References