

Preference for and Acceptability of Self-Collection of Pharyngeal Swabs for Sexually Transmitted Infection Testing

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Introduction

- Site-specific testing for *Chlamydia* and gonorrhea is recommended.
- Self-collection of pharyngeal swabs could increase availability of testing through internet or kiosk testing sites.
- Little is known about preferred versus actual choice for self- and clinician-collected pharyngeal swabs.
- Little is known about acceptability of pharyngeal swab collection among women.

Aims

Among adolescents obtaining genital STI testing in a primary care setting, compare preference for self- or clinician-collection of swabs for any STI testing and actual choice of self- or clinician-collection of pharyngeal swabs.

Among adolescent women obtaining STI testing, assess the acceptability of

- Self-collection of pharyngeal swabs
- Clinician-collection of pharyngeal swabs
- Self-collection of pharyngeal swabs in doctor's office
- Self-collection of pharyngeal swabs at home

Methods

Participants:

- Sexually active adolescents aged ≥ 14 year, receiving genital *Chlamydia* and gonorrhea testing, in a primary care, adolescent clinic.

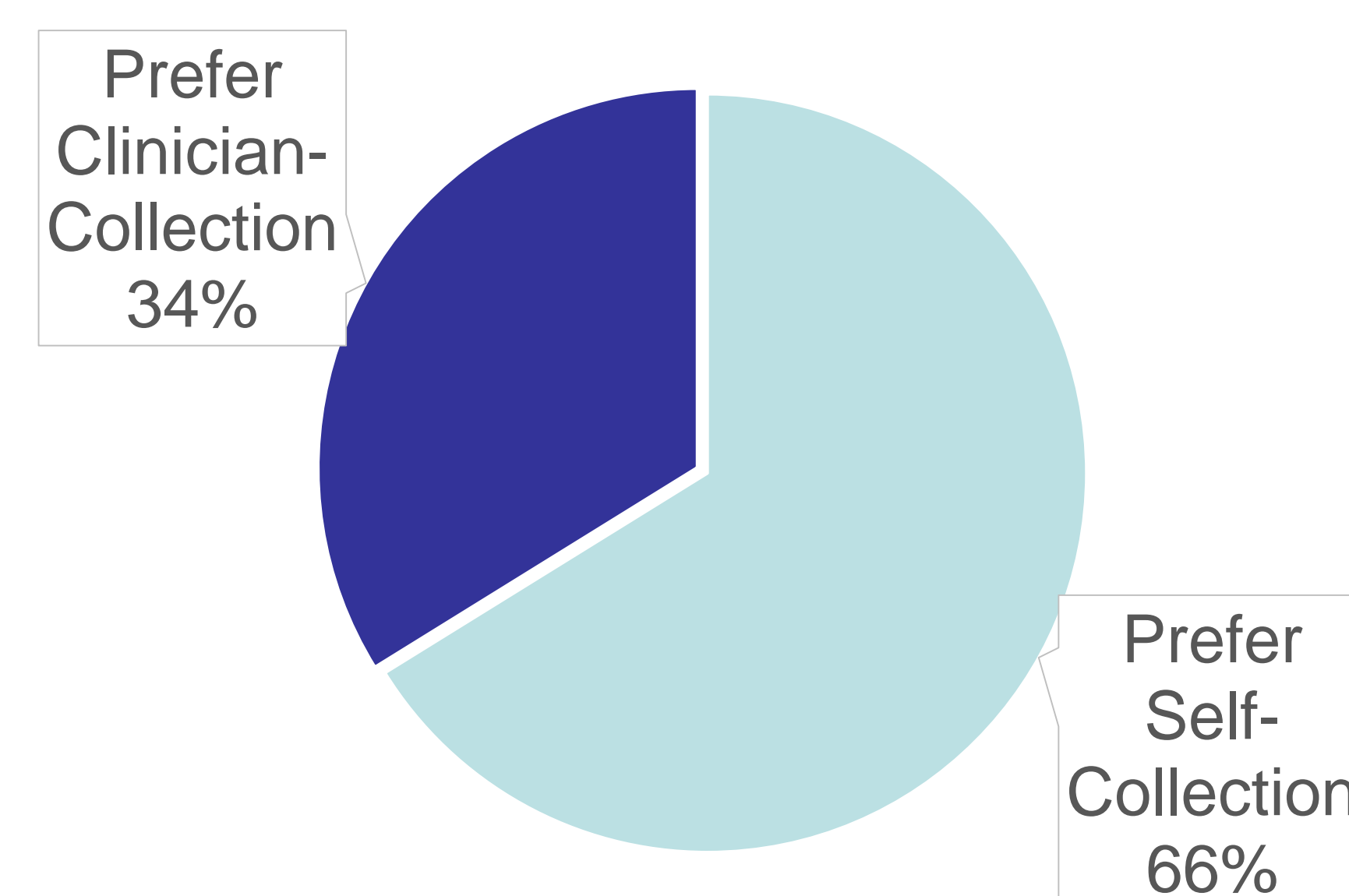
Data Collection:

- Structured interview used to assess demographics, health history, sample collection preferences and acceptability.
- **Preference:** All participants (n=68, 58 women, 10 men) responded to: "Do you prefer self- or clinician-collection of swabs" for STI testing.
- **Acceptability:** After 39 participants enrolled, items were added to assess women's perceived acceptability of:
 - "swabbing your own throat?"
 - "getting your throat swabbed by a doctor or nurse?"
 - "collecting a self-swab of your throat in a doctor's office?"
 - "collecting a self-swab of your throat at home?"
 - Response option: 5-point Likert-like scale (very acceptable, acceptable, neither acceptable nor unacceptable, unacceptable, very unacceptable).
- **Choice of pharyngeal sampling method:** Participants were instructed how to self-collect a pharyngeal swab and given a choice of self-collection or clinician-collection for the study sample.

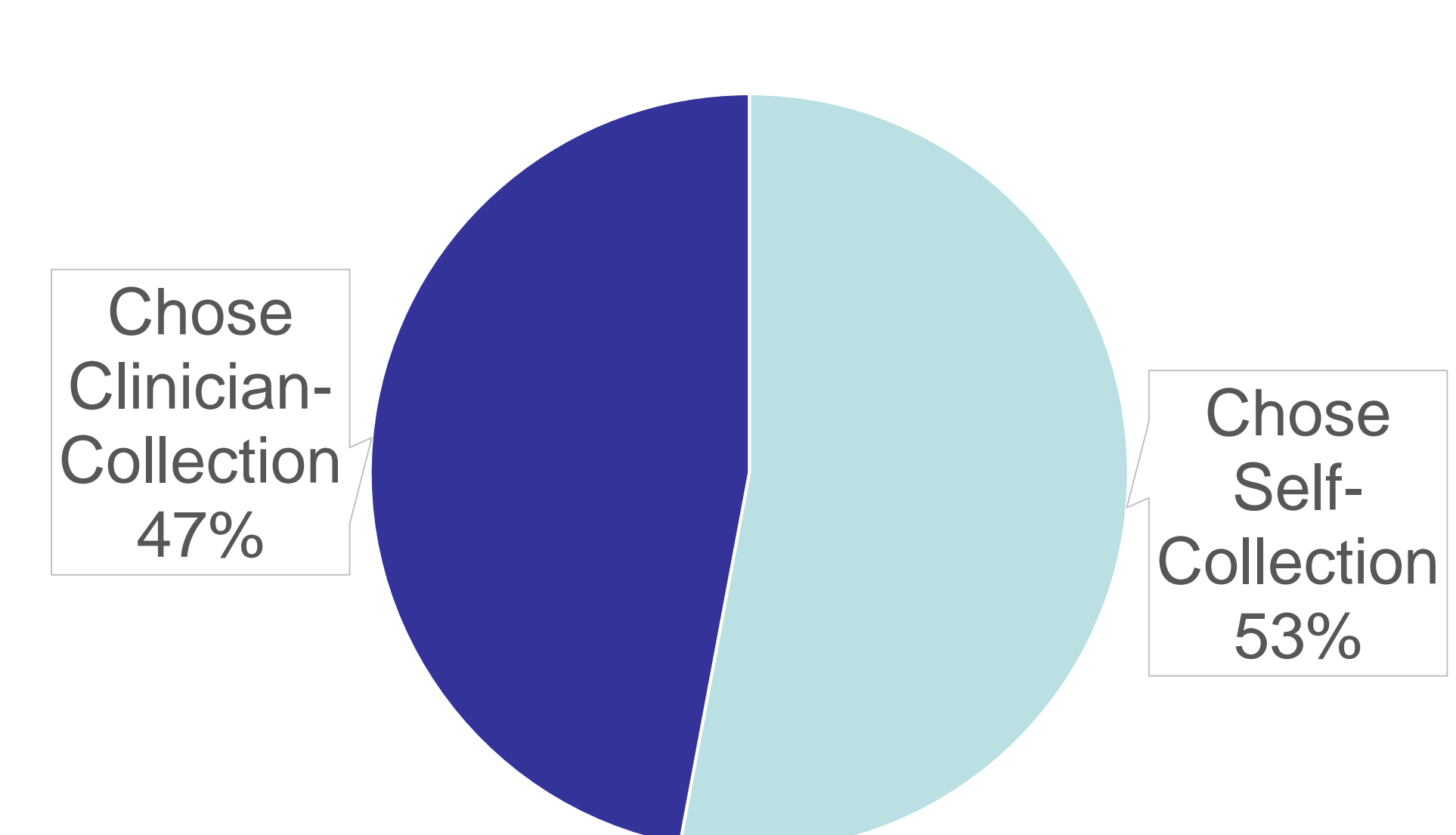
Results

- Among 68 participants (58 women, 10 men),
- 45 (66%) reported preferring self-collection versus clinician collection for any STI sampling
- 36 (52%) chose self-collection versus clinician-collection for pharyngeal sampling (p=0.12, McNemar)

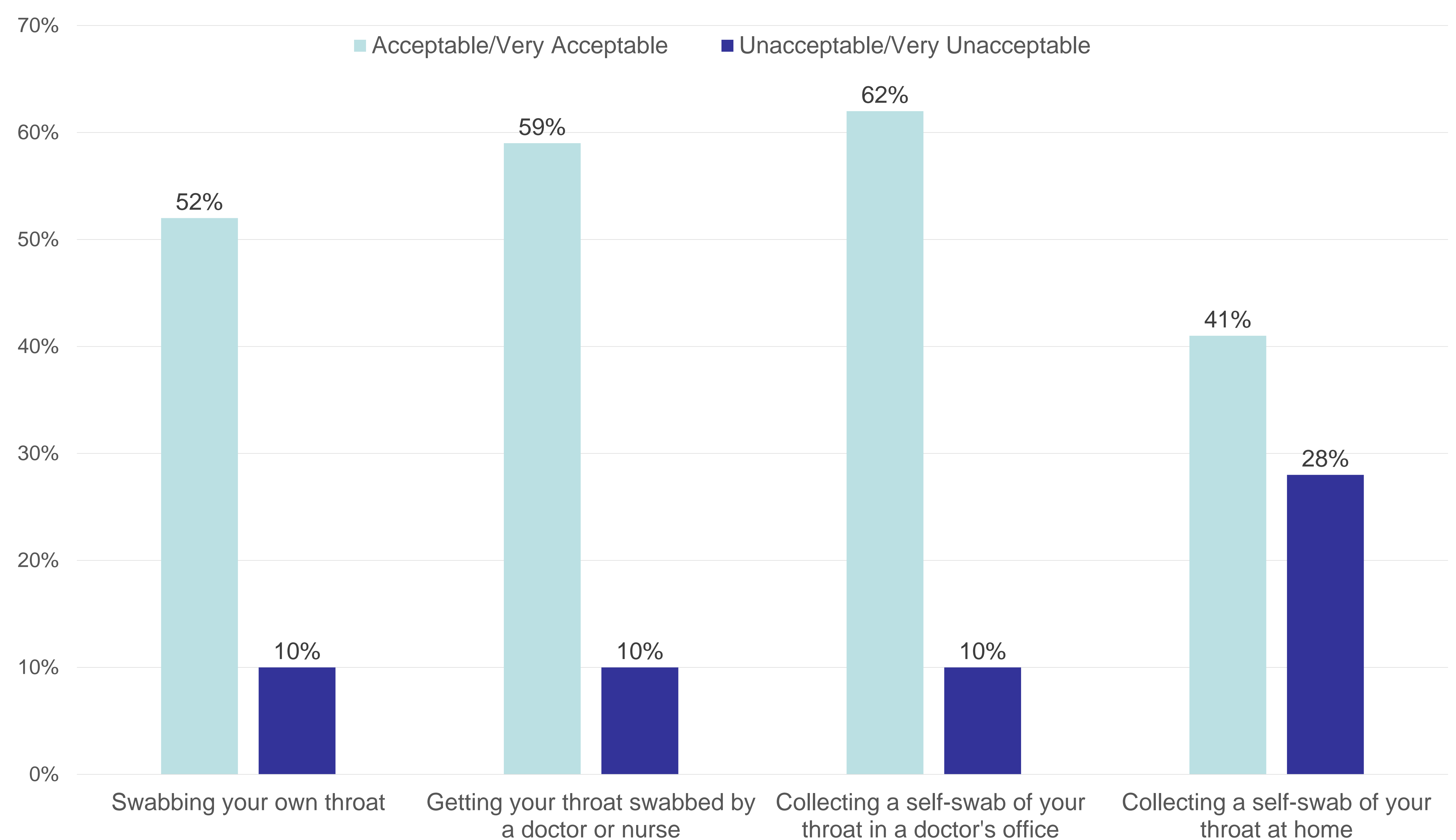
Reported Preference for Self- or Clinician-Collected Swabs for Any STI Testing (n=68)



Sample Collection Method Chosen by Participants for Pharyngeal Samples (n=68)



Acceptability of Pharyngeal Swab Collection, Among a Subset of Women (n=29)



Conclusions

- Self-collection of swabs for STI testing, including pharyngeal swabs, is preferred by a majority of adolescents.
- Women reported self-collection and clinician-collection of pharyngeal testing as acceptable.
- Understanding reasons for lower acceptability of self-collected pharyngeal swabs at home are needed to inform at-home, mail-order testing for pharyngeal STIs.
- If self-collection of pharyngeal swabs is clinically validated, at-home, mail-order testing for pharyngeal STIs may be feasible.

References and Funding

References

- Salow, Kathryn R., et al. *PLoS one* 12.12 (2017): e0189515.
- Alexander, S., et al. *Sexually transmitted infections* 84.6 (2008): 488-492.
- Papp, John R., et al. *MMWR*. 63 (2014): 1.

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