

TEXT MESSAGING FOR TEST RESULTS COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE NATIONAL CHLAMYDIA SCREENING PROGRAMME

Introduction

Text messaging is commonly used within the National Chlamydia Screening Programme (NCSP) to inform clients of their chlamydia test results. Although there is evidence to suggest the use of text messaging for results communication is acceptable and effective, reducing the average time from test to diagnosis and test to treatment (Dhar et. al, 2006; Menon-Johansson et. al), on review the NCSP found no published evidence on the most appropriate wording of text messages for positive test and negative test result notification.

Text message wording - chlamydia screening coordinator feedback

In response to enquiries from programme areas, the NCSP had previously asked chlamydia screening coordinators (CSO) to provide the text message wording currently used to inform service users of test results. Forty-two CSOs responded, with wide variation in text message wording identified:

- Wording for negative tests included 'negative' (17), 'all clear' (14), 'OK' (4) and 'chlamydia' (7).
- Wording for positive tests included 35 with 'instructions to telephone for the results' and 4 including the word 'chlamydia'.
- Some messages appeared difficult to understand unless the service user had been informed of the meaning in advance, e.g. :
 - 'You do not need to call (name of provider)'
 - 'Hi, this is (name of provider) we really need to chat please call me'
 - 'Hi, I have an important health message for you'
 - 'CS says everything is OK'
- In delivering positive test text messages, several programmes had a series of messages giving more information if there was no response to the initial message, e.g.:
 - Text 1: Hi Please contact xxx to discuss your recent test results
 - Text 2: Hi Please contact xxx your chlamydia test is positive and you need antibiotics.
 - Text 3: Hi Please contact xxx. According to our records you have an untreated chlamydia infection. Let us know if you have received antibiotics. If we do not hear from you we will contact your GP Thanks.
- Some programmes included health promotion information or advice to test again within a year.

The review of existing CSO text message wording raised the following questions:

- Should the word 'chlamydia' be mentioned?
- Are the terms 'positive' and 'negative' understood, or should alternative, more generic, phrases should be used, e.g. 'all clear'?
- Is it helpful to specifically tell service users that no further action is required for a negative test result, or should it be assumed this is understood?
- Should positive test results be delivered directly by text message rather than asking the service user to telephone for a positive result?

- When it is appropriate to include safer sex messages and/or reinforce NCSP messages on regular screening?

Text message wording - service user insights

To engage service users in answering these questions, three questions on text message wording were included within a broader web-based survey being undertaken by the HPA in 2012 to investigate young adults' attitudes to chlamydia and chlamydia testing. The survey engaged a nationally representative sample of 1588 young adults, with 1521 complete and 67 incomplete responses (with a 4% drop out rate after initiating survey).

Inclusion of the word chlamydia:

The results show a slight preference for messages that do **not** include the word chlamydia (47% agree). This proportion is higher among those who have not been tested (54% agree) and among females (53% agree).

Please read the following statements and decide to what extent you agree or disagree with each of them...	Agree	% Agree	Disagree	% Disagree
Messages should include the word chlamydia (for instance "Your chlamydia test result is positive")	629	41%	590	39%
Messages should not include the word chlamydia (for instance "Your test result is clear")	711	47%	465	31%
Messages should ask you to call a number for your test result	563	37%	529	35%

Correct understanding of 'positive test result':

83% (1268/1521) of respondents understood a text message stating their test result is 'positive' to mean that they had chlamydia. 76% (1163/1521) of respondents recognised it as the only one of the options presented that meant this. There was no clear preference among users about whether programmes should or should not ask them to call a number for their test result.

Which of the following test results would you understand to mean you have chlamydia?	Chosen	% Chosen	Not chosen	% Not chosen
"Your test result is positive"	1268	83%	253	17%
"Your test result is negative"	167	11%	1354	89%
"Your test result is clear"	131	9%	1390	91%
"Your test result is okay"	564	37%	530	35%

Correct understanding of 'negative test result':

75% (1145/1521) of respondents understood a test result of 'negative' to mean that they did not have chlamydia. Only 32% (481/1521) of respondents recognised that all the options apart from 'positive' meant this.

Which of the following test results would you understand to mean you do not have chlamydia?	Chosen	% Chosen	Not chosen	% Not chosen
"Your test result is positive"	111	7%	1410	93%
"Your test result is negative"	1145	75%	376	25%
"Your test result is clear"	961	63%	560	37%
"Your test result is okay"	584	38%	937	62%

Conclusions

The results of the web-based survey of young adults found:

- The majority, but not all, correctly interpret the phrase 'your test result is positive/negative':
 - As an important minority do not understand these terms, we recommend a clarification should be added, e.g. 'This means that we [did/did not] find [chlamydia /the infection] in your test.'
 - As the terms 'clear' and 'OK' are much less well understood, we recommend services replace with the term 'negative'.
- There is a *slight* user preference that the word 'chlamydia' is not included. However, as increasing numbers of test results (including tests for other infections) are now delivered by text message, services should consider this against potential confusion caused by not specifying 'chlamydia'. The NCSP recommendation is that text message notifications do specify 'chlamydia', for clarity.
- Particular care should be taken where tests for more than one infection are conducted on the same sample to ensure that clients are aware of the results of all tests.
- There was no clear preference from users about whether they should be asked to telephone a central number to receive a result.

CHLAMYDIA TEST RESULTS: TEXT MESSAGE RECOMMENDED WORDING

For negative test result notification:

The result of your [chlamydia] test is negative. This means that we did not find [chlamydia/the infection] in your test.

For positive test results notification:

- The result of your [chlamydia] test is available; please telephone xxxx for further information.
- The result of your [chlamydia] test is positive, which means you need antibiotics to treat this infection. Please contact [*add local information for appropriate service*].
- Your chlamydia test result showed you need treatment. Please contact [*add local information for appropriate service*].

Notes: where the decision is made not to include the word chlamydia, another way of identifying the test should be included, e.g. the date taken or the service where it was taken. Particular care should be taken when more than one test e.g. chlamydia and gonorrhoea was taken to ensure that clients know which result refers to which test.