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## Background

The 2019 Namibia Integrated Biological and Behavioural Surveillance Survey estimated HIV prevalence amongst female sex workers (FSWs) at 44.2% in Katima Mulilo, 20.0% in Walvis Bay, and 21.3% in Windhoek districts. The KP-STAR project assesses the implementation outcomes of community-based service delivery through KP-led civil society organisations (CSOs) to mitigate barriers to service access. KP-STAR, which is implemented in 10 priority geographical areas (PGAs), is conducting seamless integration of services with KP-led CSOs. Interventions include case finding, linkage to ART, case management for retention in care, and viral suppression for KPs living with HIV. The project is funded by PEPFAR through USAID and implemented by IntraHealth Namibia.

## Methods

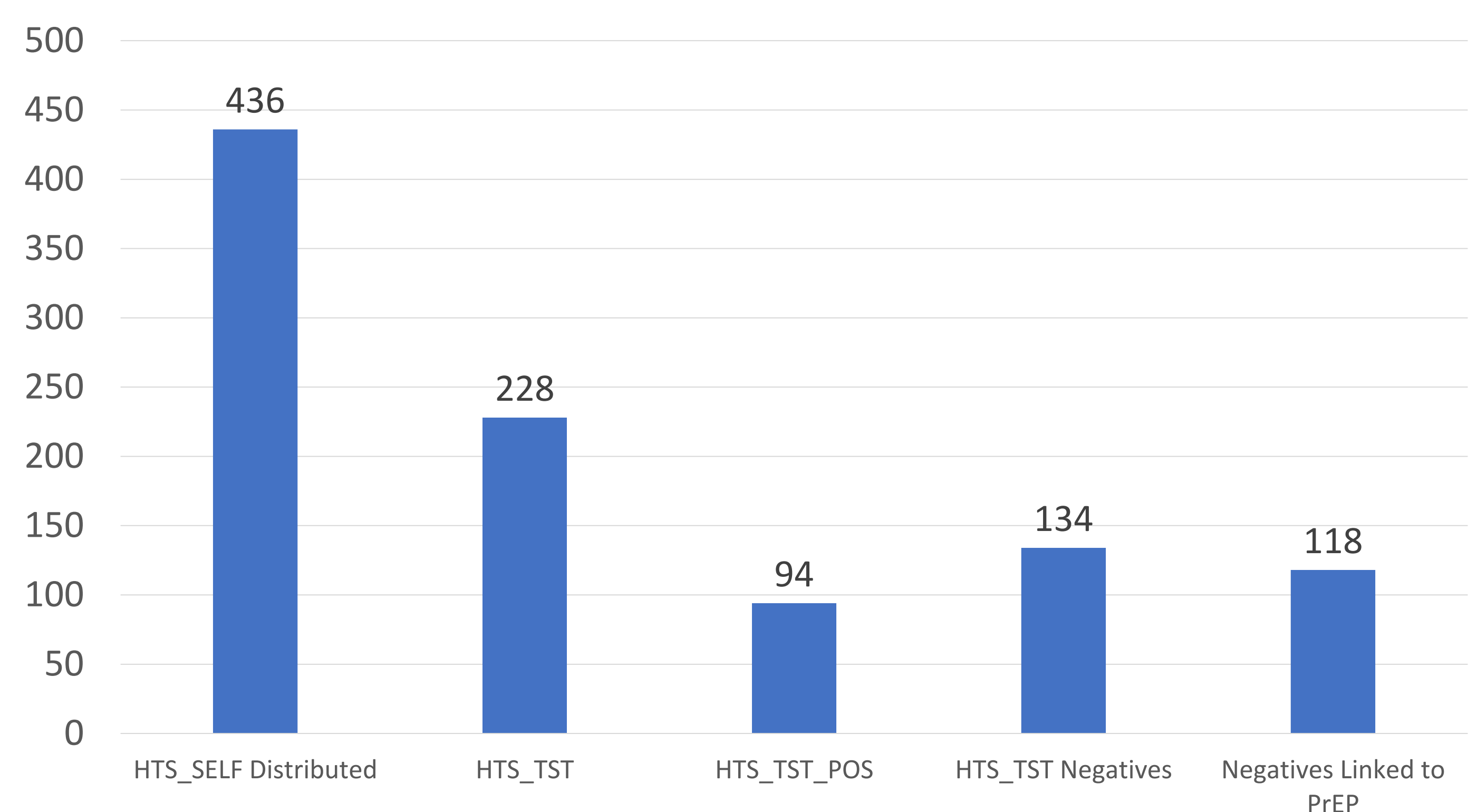
Between April 2020-March 2021 six peer educators and two case managers were selected from two KP-led CSOs and trained on risk counselling and distribution of HIV self-test (HIVST) kits. The peer educators distributed HIVST kits to peers at 11 hotspots. They provided HIV prevention messages and risk reduction counselling and supported linkage to ART for those testing positive and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) initiation for HIV-negative eligible peers. We analysed aggregate program data from KP-STAR's database.



## Results

Over the 12-month implementation period, 436 HIVST kits were distributed to FSWs in Katima Mulilo. As per Ministry of Health and Social Services guidelines, 228 FSWs were referred for confirmatory rapid testing, of which 94 tested positive (41% yield); 134 FSWs were interested in starting PrEP of which 118 were initiated (88% rate).

1 April-2020-31 March 2021



## Conclusions

For epidemic control, the strategy of distributing HIVST kits to hotspots used in Katima Mulilo was innovative and targeted. Self-testing allowed clients in the community to access services at their convenience, decongesting health facilities as only clients requiring further HIV services need to attend facility-level service provision; and complying with measures to curb the spread of COVID-19. Seeing the success of this strategy in Katima Mulilo, KP-STAR has scaled it up to other PGAs. Benefits of self-testing include privacy, anonymity, and peer support; accompaniment by a peer during and after HIVST supports saving on travel costs and retaining access to a facility.