

Benefits and Uses of the UTC

Use of the UTC allows analyses to be done conducted based on the number of people testing, as opposed to the number of testing episodes. The unduplicated database created using the UTC can be useful in characterization and evaluation at multiple levels. These may include state, regional, project site or other geographically defined areas. In addition, the UTC may be used for risk-reduction planning for individuals who repeat test at the same location over time.

Examples of the benefits and uses of the UTC are listed below:

*An unduplicated database will give more accurate rates of HIV infection (seroprevalence) during a defined time period.

*In conjunction with STARHS, an unduplicated database can be used to determine rates of new or incident infection among repeat testers.

*Examination of repeat testing records can provide precise estimates of confirmation testing, a second test to confirm a previously positive test. Analysis may also provide information on the number of testers changing from anonymous to confidential testing (or vice versa) during a second test.

*Examination of repeat testing records can reveal patterns of reporting additional and more diverse risk behaviors in a single person over time. This would provide important data for explaining categories of “no acknowledged risk” or “other” modes of transmission.

*Differences between one-time and repeat testers can offer useful insight into time and resource allocation. For example, rates of duplicate testing at a residential treatment facility for injection drug users can be evaluated in light of changes in high risk behavior.

*State level differences between one-time and repeat testers are less apparent due to large data sets. However, differences that do appear, such as the higher proportion of repeat testers with IDU risk, may indicate the need for evaluation at regional or site levels.

*Examination of repeat tester records has value as a quality assurance tool for the accuracy of data collected, i.e., the UTC can detect duplicate record entry and may be useful in laboratory quality assurance by detecting what appear to be false negatives or false positives.

*At the site level, examination of repeat tester records may be used to evaluate the efforts of individual counselors.

*The UTC has the potential for helping with creating or reinforcing a risk reduction plan with an individual client. The UTC can be used in a clinic setting to link database

records for a client. This would provide the prevention counselor with a client's risk behaviors and risk reduction plans over time.