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# Testing time

Three youths will undergo their first HIV test this week as part of the R.AGE Experiment series.



## NIKI CHEONG

**T**HIS generation of youths has never known a world without AIDS. Perhaps that is why they are more open to discussing the epidemic as they were not around when fear and hysteria were the most typical response to HIV and AIDS.

In the 30 years since the emergence of the AIDS epidemic, new developments have unfolded. Treatment has become more accessible, and that has influenced perceptions towards the disease. Although people living with HIV and AIDS still live in fear of stigma and discrimination, there are also efforts to educate our youths about the epidemic.

These days, it is not uncommon to hear young people speak about HIV/AIDS. Many students take on this cause as part of their college or university project. These campaigns often focus on awareness of the disease, safer sex and the risk of getting infected with HIV through injecting drug use.

Knowledge about risky behaviour or transmission modes however does not offer protection against HIV infection.

One of the biggest challenges

in prevention efforts is in translating knowledge into behavioural change.

The biggest hurdle in curbing the spread of HIV is the "it's not going to happen to me" attitude, and some people would rather live in denial of their risks of infection.

Although HIV testing is available, not many people want to know their status.

If testing is accompanied with counselling, it is one of the most effective prevention methods for it compels individuals to confront their vulnerability to being infected with HIV.

As part of R.AGE's Experiment series (where we get three young people to put themselves in unfamiliar situations), and in conjunction with World AIDS Day on Dec 1, three young people have volunteered to undergo their first ever HIV testing.

They will research and decide on where to go for their HIV test this week.

Throughout the next seven days, each of these youths will

document their thoughts and feelings before, during and after their tests via Twitter and on the R.AGE blog.

To follow their Tweets and to find out what they are up to and how they are feeling, you can log on to R.AGE Online ([www.rage.com.my](http://www.rage.com.my)).

## Hana

Age: 23

Occupation: Production Manager

The opportunity to participate in this project was aptly coincidental. I've always thought about doing a HIV screening ever since I was involved in an HIV/AIDS awareness campaign. That was about 10 months ago.

The long delay in taking the test

## Eugene

Age: 18

Occupation: Student

Hobbies: Reading, Swimming, Cycling

I agreed to participate in this project to educate myself and my fellow youths about HIV/AIDS. As someone who is sexually active,

is because of a fear that I didn't acknowledge. I've always found reasons to delay it, from work to time management issues. Although I've heard a lot and know about

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the importance of HIV testing, I am still afraid of the process and result because I was sexually active.

I want people to know that it is crucial that you know your HIV status, and that it is ok to be afraid of the testing.

HIV testing has crossed my mind a couple of times but I never took it seriously. Having now done proper research to prepare for my HIV test, I really think youths (including myself) need to be really aware about this and to take it very seriously. I am absolutely terrified of going through with the test, but I know that I have to do it.



**Ashvina**

**Age: 25**

**Occupation: Journalist**

**Hobbies: Movies, dancing, eating and travelling**

Honestly, it has never crossed my mind that I could be HIV positive. All my relationships are monogamous (at least I hope so) and I don't use drugs intravenously. If anything, I've always been more worried about getting pregnant than contracting HIV. Taking part in this project, I think, would be a chance for me to find out what it feels like to be a person who thinks she could have HIV.

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**RAGE**

**The Intern Chronicles**  
**Behind the Stories**

Ever wondered how the stories and articles appear in front of your eyes on the newspaper? Get the inside news and the behind-the-scenes take, from the interns' point of view! Check out The Intern Chronicles in [blog.rage.com.my](http://blog.rage.com.my)! Check us out at [rage.com.my](http://rage.com.my)!

**It's Movie Time!**

Get your popcorns and your snacks ready for the latest wave of movies to hit our shores! We want to know what movies you have been anticipating for! Go to our Poll section in our website to cast your votes for the must-watch movie that you've been waiting for!

**Charter for Compassion**

Renowned author, Karen Armstrong had a wish, to start a movement of compassion around the world based on the fundamental principles of universal justice and respect. RAGE went to the streets to ask our youths on what does compassion mean to them. Go to our website and check out the video that we did for Charter for Compassion.

**Find us at**  
**[rage.com.my](http://rage.com.my)**

The Twilight Saga: New Moon - Werewolves and vampires. Enough said!

The Princess and The Frog - Folklore stories and Disney makes the best combination!

Avatar - Sci-Fi movies are the bomb!

Astro Boy - Japanese animation turned Hollywood movie. Awesome!

The Storm Warriors - Nothing beats the good fashioned Chinese kung fu fighting action!