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Gay men's attitudes to HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis and treatment as prevention: results from the PrEPARE Project, 2011-13

Martin Holt, Toby Lea, Dean Murphy, Jeanne Ellard,
Marsha Rosengarten, Susan Kippax, John de Wit

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Arts & Social Sciences

Centre for Social Research in Health

Background

- Acceptability research is necessary to understand (and build) community support for PrEP and TasP (Holt, 2014)
- PrEPARE Project: national, online surveys of gay and bisexual men conducted in 2011 and 2013
 - 2011 round conducted after iPrEx/before HPTN 052 results
 - 2013 round after Ending HIV launch in NSW, before PrEP demonstration projects began
 - First study to look at PrEP and TasP acceptability in Australia (Holt et al, 2012, 2013), and to assess change over time (Holt et al, 2014a, 2014b)
 - 2015 round of the survey about to be launched.

Sample

| | 2011 n=1,283 | 2013 n=1,316 | p value |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|---------|
| Gay identified | 92% | 92% | ns |
| Australian born | 82% | 77% | .003 |
| Lives in capital city | 76% | 76% | ns |
| Full-time employed | 60% | 56% | .004 |
| HIV-negative | 72% | 73% | ns |
| HIV-positive | 10% | 7% | |
| Untested/unknown | 19% | 20% | |
| >10 male partners last 6 months | 21% | 18% | ns |
| Condomless anal sex (regular partners) | 46% | 47% | ns |
| Condomless anal sex (casual partners) | 28% | 27% | ns |

Source: Holt et al, 2014a

Change between 2011 and 2013

- How many men were willing to use PrEP?
 - Scoring ≥ 4 on a 7-item scale (scored from 1-5)
 - 28% in 2011 vs. 23% in 2013
 - Adjusted OR 0.83, 95% CI 0.68–1.00, $p=.05$
- Changes in attitudes to HIV treatments/TasP
 - The sample was largely sceptical about TasP in 2011 and 2013; HIV-positive men were less sceptical in both years.
 - There was a small but significant improvement in one of HIV-negative men's attitudes to ART ($p<.01$); HIV-positive men's attitudes remained unchanged.
 - In both years, HIV-positive men had more optimistic attitudes about taking HIV treatments.

Source: Holt et al, 2014a, 2014b

Who is willing to use PrEP?

| 2011 (n=1,161) | AOR (95% CI) |
|---|------------------|
| Age (in years) | 0.98 (0.96–0.99) |
| No anal intercourse with casual partners | Ref. |
| Consistent condom use | 1.55 (1.12–2.15) |
| Any condomless | 2.82 (2.02–3.95) |
| Concern about using PrEP | 0.20 (0.12–0.33) |
| Perceived likelihood of becoming HIV positive | 4.67 (2.82–9.57) |

Source: Holt et al, 2012

Who is willing to use PrEP?

| 2011 (n=1,161) | AOR (95% CI) | 2013 (n=1,223) | AOR (95% CI) |
|---|------------------|---|------------------|
| Age (in years) | 0.98 (0.96–0.99) | Age | 0.98 (0.96–0.99) |
| No anal intercourse with casual partners | Ref. | HIV–negative partner | Ref. |
| Consistent condom use | 1.55 (1.12–2.15) | HIV–positive partner | 3.23 (1.48–7.05) |
| Any condomless | 2.82 (2.02–3.95) | Ever taken PEP | 1.56 (1.01–2.40) |
| Concern about using PrEP | 0.20 (0.12–0.33) | Concern about using PrEP | 0.50 (0.37–0.68) |
| Perceived likelihood of becoming HIV positive | 4.67 (2.82–9.57) | Perceived likelihood of becoming HIV positive | 1.41 (1.18–1.69) |

Source: Holt et al, 2012, 2014a

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Source: Holt et al, 2012, 2014a

Belief that ART reduces transmission

3-item scale, scored 1-5:

- An HIV-positive person who is on HIV treatments is unlikely to transmit HIV
- A person with an undetectable viral load cannot pass on HIV
- If every HIV-positive person was on treatment the HIV epidemic would be over

Source: Holt et al, 2014b

Belief that ART reduces transmission

- In 2013, only 3% of men agreed that HIV treatment reduces transmission (scored ≥ 4)

| n=1,059 | AOR (95% CI) |
|----------------------|------------------|
| HIV status | |
| HIV-negative | Ref. |
| HIV-positive | 3.32 (1.34–8.19) |
| HIV-negative partner | Ref. |
| HIV-positive partner | 3.02 (1.01–9.08) |
| Ever taken PEP | 2.49 (1.06–5.88) |

Source: Holt et al, 2014b

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Source: Holt et al, 2014b

Summary

- In 2013, a quarter of HIV-negative/untested men were willing to use PrEP
 - Interest declined slightly between 2011 and 2013
 - Interest remains concentrated among men who appear to be at high risk of HIV
- In 2013, few gay and bisexual men agreed that HIV treatment reduces transmission
 - Belief in TasP is greater among HIV-positive men, men who have HIV-positive partners and previous PEP users
 - Community engagement and education remain important, if TasP is to become a key part of prevention in Australia

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- For copies, email Martin Holt (m.holt@unsw.edu.au)