

# What Are People Saying About DoxyPEP? A Topic-Based Analysis of Reddit Discussions

## Authors:

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## Background/Purpose:

DoxyPEP is a strategy for bacterial STI prevention, however, despite strong evidence from clinical trials that the strategy reduces incidence of syphilis and chlamydia, current understanding of its acceptability and uptake is largely derived from survey-based studies. Social media offers a perspective by capturing naturalistic, first-person accounts of attitudes and experiences across diverse communities. In this study, we aim to examine how DoxyPEP is discussed in online communities and identify dominant themes that may influence its implementation.

## Approach:

We applied an unsupervised text analysis approach (BERTopic) to identify interpretable themes from a large corpus of Reddit posts discussing DoxyPEP, and subsequently conducted expert review to validate and refine the thematic structure.

## Outcomes/Impact:

We identified 8,139 posts valid for analysis. Discussions encompassed prevention strategies, sexual practices, antimicrobial resistance, and healthcare access. Notably, conversations extended beyond Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) contexts to include heterosexual, bisexual, polyamorous, and swinger communities, where DoxyPEP was discussed as part of broader risk management practices. Rather than simple misinformation, posts reflected active negotiation of evolving biomedical evidence and personal risk. Access to LGBTIQ+ friendly clinicians and telehealth services facilitated uptake, while provider knowledge gaps acted as barriers.

## Innovation and Significance:

Online community-generated discourse provides insight into how emerging STI prevention and interventions are interpreted in practice, particularly around risk assessment, access to appropriate care, and concerns about antimicrobial resistance. Clearer, consistent clinical guidance and information-sharing by community-level organizations may help support informed and equitable DoxyPEP implementation and better sexual health education.

## Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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