

# UPTAKE OF HIV TESTING AND PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS AMONG TRANSGENDER AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA: RESULTS FROM A LONGITUDINAL NATIONAL COHORT

## Background

In Australia, transgender and gender diverse ('trans') people have a higher incidence of HIV than their cisgender peers. Very little is known, however, about HIV testing or pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) among trans people in Australia.

## Methods

Data were collected from 2016-2024 via the Australian Collaboration for Enhanced Sentinel Surveillance (ACCESS), comprising 44 sexual health clinics, 32 general practices, 9 community testing sites, and 2 hospitals. HIV test uptake and frequency and annual PrEP uptake were calculated, with trends examined via mixed-effects and linear regression analyses.

## Results

In total, 8,908 HIV-negative and unknown HIV status trans people attended a participating service (5,504 women, 3,129 men, 275 non-binary). In 2016, 71.2% of trans people were tested for HIV, which decreased to 61.8% in 2024 (adjusted odds ratio [aOR]=0.85, 95% confidence interval [CI]:0.83,0.86). Test frequency also decreased from 1.61 to 1.09 tests per patient per year ( $\beta$ =-0.14, 95%CI:-0.15,-0.13). These decreases aligned with the COVID-19 pandemic, with little recovery in recent years. PrEP uptake was 17.5% in 2016 (first year available in Australia), increasing to 21.0% in 2024 (aOR=1.07, 95%CI:1.05,1.10). Overall, 23.5% of trans people accessed PrEP at least once during the study period, highest among trans women (31.9%) and non-binary people (26.9%; aOR=0.78, 95%CI:0.59,1.02) and lowest among trans men (8.5%; aOR=0.19, 95%CI:0.17,0.22). Among trans people, factors positively associated with PrEP uptake were older age (aOR=1.02, 95%CI:1.01,1.04), recent sex work (aOR=2.64, 95%CI:2.00,3.49), and  $\geq 10$  sexual partners annually (aOR=3.52, 95%CI:2.72,4.54). Overall, 44.2% of trans sex workers accessed PrEP at least once as did 69.5% of those with  $\geq 10$  sexual partners.

## Conclusions

Among trans people in Australia, HIV testing has decreased in recent years. PrEP uptake increased over time, but gaps remain among sub-populations who could benefit from its protection. Strategies are needed to promote regular HIV testing and PrEP among trans people in Australia.