

ASSESSING THE HIV PREVENTION NEEDS OF YOUNG GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN IN THE PREP ERA: A NATIONAL ANALYSIS OF BEHAVIOURAL TRENDS FROM THE GAY COMMUNITY PERIODIC SURVEYS

Chan C¹, Broady T¹, Bavinton B², Mao L¹, Prestage G², Holt M¹

¹ Centre for Social Research in Health, UNSW Sydney, ² The Kirby Institute

Background: Young gay and bisexual men (YGBM) remain of interest for HIV prevention, as they may know less about HIV when they become sexually active and not consistently engage with health services. We assessed trends in YGBM's behaviour relative to older men.

Methods: Using national data from the Gay Community Periodic Surveys, we analysed trends in the sexual practices of YGBM (under 25 years old) and older men (aged 25-49) during 2014-18 and compared both groups in 2018 using multivariate logistic regression. Adjusted odds ratios (AOR) are reported.

Results: Results from 36,015 GBM were included (2014-18), 8033 (22.3%) of whom were under 25 years old. Between 2014 and 2018, condomless anal intercourse with casual partners (CAIC) became more likely in both groups ($p < .001$), as did recent HIV testing ($p < .001$) and PrEP use ($p < .001$). Younger men became less likely to identify as gay over time ($p < .001$). In 2018, YGBM were less likely than older men to be full-time employed (36.0% vs. 75.4%, AOR=0.643, $p < .001$), university educated (32.0% vs. 61.0%, AOR=0.406, $p < .001$), gay-identified (79.8% vs. 89.8%, AOR=0.662, $p < .001$) or socially engaged with gay men (65.0% vs. 78.3%, AOR=0.662, $p < .001$). YGBM were less likely to report more than 20 recent partners (12.8% vs. 21.2%, AOR=0.401, $p < .001$), to be tested for HIV (76.3% vs. 95.4%, AOR=0.159, $p < .001$), to know about (83.7% vs. 93.7%, AOR=0.729, $p = .036$) or be on PrEP (13.5% vs. 24.3%, AOR=0.647, $p = .001$). Both groups were equally likely to engage in CAIC (32.9% vs. 35.2%) and reported similar levels of heavy drinking (87.9% vs. 87.1%) and drug use for sex (17.6% vs. 18.6%).

Conclusion: YGBM are not disproportionately at higher risk of HIV compared to their older counterparts, but a minority need greater access to testing and effective HIV prevention. Interventions need to acknowledge YGBM's lower incomes, education and involvement in gay networks.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: The Centre for Social Research in Health and the Kirby Institute are supported by the Australian Government Department of Health. The Gay Community Periodic Surveys are supported by state and territory health departments and surveillance funding from the Australian Government Department of Health. No pharmaceutical funding was involved in this research.