

NATIONAL PREP CASCADE FOR AUSTRALIAN GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN AND ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING UPTAKE: RESULTS FROM THE GAY COMMUNITY PERIODIC SURVEYS, 2014-18

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Background: Cascades assessing eligibility for, awareness of and use of PrEP can be useful in addressing progress in implementation. Using national behavioural surveillance of Australian gay and bisexual men (the Gay Community Periodic Surveys, GCPS), we assessed trends in uptake (up to the end of 2018) and conducted a 'break point' analysis of the largest drop off in the cascade to identify disparities in uptake.

Methods: Using national GCPS data (2014-18), we analysed trends in eligibility for, awareness of and use of PrEP by non-HIV-positive men. Eligibility was defined as recent receptive condomless anal intercourse with casual partners (CAIC), CAI with HIV-positive partners not on treatment, STI diagnoses, or methamphetamine use. We used logistic regression to test trends and compare eligible and aware participants using and not using PrEP in 2018.

Results: Responses from 39,670 non-HIV-positive participants were included. PrEP eligibility increased from 28.1% in 2014 to 37.3% in 2018 ($p<.001$). Eligibility increased due to rising CAIC and STI diagnoses. Awareness among eligible men increased from 29.6% to 87.1% ($p<.001$) and PrEP use among eligible and aware men increased from 3.7% to 45.2% ($p<.001$). The multivariate break point analysis indicated that PrEP use was lower among eligible/aware men who were younger (<25 years), less educated or socially engaged with gay men, not Anglo-Australian, from Western Australia, and with lower levels of sexual activity and drug use. Eligible, aware, non-PrEP-users reported high levels of recent CAIC (64.4%), STIs (50.9%) and party drugs for sex (29.0%).

Conclusion: PrEP eligibility, awareness and use have rapidly increased, but over half of eligible gay and bisexual men were not using PrEP at the end of 2018. Highlighting 'on demand' PrEP to men who periodically engage in CAIC or sex-related drug use could be useful. Promoting PrEP to less educated men outside of Anglo-Australian, gay social networks also appears warranted.

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