

# EXPLORING DRUG USE IN THE CONTEXT OF SEX AMONG GAY, BISEXUAL AND OTHER MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN USING PREP AND TESTING FOR HIV AT PRONTO! IN MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

## Authors:

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## Background:

There is inconsistent evidence that use of HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) may contribute to risk compensation, including condomless anal intercourse, drug use and STI incidence. We explore drug use in the context of sex among PrEP users presenting for HIV testing in Melbourne to explore changes in drug use following initiation of PrEP.

## Methods:

Clients attending PRONTO! completed a behavioural surveillance survey at each appointment that included capture of drugs used in the context of sex. We extracted survey data among clients attending between 01 January 2016 and 31 December 2017 reporting any PrEP use and at least one survey following first report of PrEP use (baseline). We describe the prevalence of past six months methamphetamine, gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB), Viagra, and ecstasy use among clients at baseline and the last survey in follow up period with reported PrEP use (follow-up). We assessed difference in use at baseline and follow up using test of proportion, significance  $p < 0.05$ .

## Results:

This analysis included 316 clients across a median follow-up 273 days. At baseline 73% (n=230) reported any drug use; 13% (n=42) reported methamphetamine use, 27% (n=84) reported Viagra use, 10% (n=32) reported GHB use, and 23% (n=73) reported ecstasy use. At the last follow-up survey, 12% (n=39) reported methamphetamine use ( $p=0.9$ ) (12/42 no longer used and 9/274 began using), 28% (n=88) reported Viagra use ( $p=0.9$ ) (14/84 no longer used and 18/232 began using), 9% (n=29) reported GHB use ( $p=0.9$ ) (10/32 no longer used and 7/284 began using), and 23% (n=72) reported ecstasy use ( $p=1.0$ ) (17/73 no longer used and 16/243 began using).

## Conclusion:

While some clients began using drugs following PrEP uptake this was offset by clients ceasing drug use at follow up. This finding is inconsistent with concerns that PrEP use may encourage greater drug-related sexual risk taking and highlights the need for greater research into the nuanced relationship between sex, drugs, and PrEP.

## Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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