

HIGH STI INCIDENCE AMONG NZPREP STUDY PARTICIPANTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR REAL WORLD DELIVERY

Authors:

Azariah S¹, Saxton P², Jenkins R¹

¹ Auckland Regional Sexual Health Service, Auckland, New Zealand ² School of Population Health, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

Introduction:

Public health practitioners need to understand sexually transmitted infection (STI) incidence among HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) users to plan clinical services and safe sex messaging. PrEP was publicly funded in New Zealand in March 2018 but there are no STI data to guide decision-making. We provide the first STI incidence estimates among gay and bisexual men (GBM) taking PrEP.

Methods:

NZPrEP is an open-label single-arm PrEP treatment trial in a sexual health clinic in Auckland, New Zealand. We enrolled 150 GBM who satisfied high-risk inclusion criteria, had no medical contraindications and provided informed consent. Participants were tested for HIV, syphilis, chlamydia and gonorrhoea at study enrolment (visit 1), then at 1 month (visit 2) and thereafter 3-monthly (visits 3+). Other symptomatic and between-visit STIs (e.g. herpes) were recorded. Participants completed an online behavioural survey at baseline and 3-monthly visits. Data linkage was via a unique code. We report STI incidence to 6 month follow-up and associations with baseline characteristics.

Results:

At baseline, any STI prevalence was 24% (12.7% chlamydia, 11.3% gonorrhoea, 2.7% syphilis) and 18% had a rectal STI. The incidence of rectal STI and any STI was 7.4% and 16.2% respectively at visit 2; 15.7% and 24.3% at visit 3 (3 months); and 12.5% and 30.0% at visit 4 (6 months). Cumulative incidence at 6 months was chlamydia 33.9%, gonorrhoea 27.3%, syphilis 7.8%, rectal STI 30.8% and any STI 54.8%. Cumulative incidence of any STIs at 6 months was significantly higher among participants who at baseline reported 10+ male partners (61.9%, $p<0.05$), group sex (67.7%, $p<0.01$) and chemsex (81.8%, $p<0.01$), but was not associated with ethnicity or age.

Conclusion:

STI incidence was high in this sample of GBM on PrEP. Many attended more frequently than required by protocol. This has implications for service planning as testing, treatment and follow-up requires additional resources.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: *See example below:*

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