

INCREASE IN UPTAKE AND INCIDENCE OF HIV PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PREP) AMONG GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN IN AUSTRALIA.

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Background:

In Australia, gay and bisexual men (GBM) are the population at highest risk of HIV infection and subsidized access to PrEP has just become available to those who meet clinical guidelines for eligibility.

For the first time in Australia, we report incidence and factors associated with initiation of PrEP, and assess whether GBM receiving PrEP met current guidelines.

Methods:

Flux is a national, online prospective observational study of drug use and sexual behaviors among Australian GBM. 1142 HIV-negative GBM were followed at 6 monthly intervals for 2-years.

Time-varying variables were assessed as potential predictors of PrEP uptake.

Incidence rate ratios (IRR) and corresponding 95% confidence intervals (95%CI) are presented.

Results:

Median age was 31.0 years. PrEP use increased from 1.0% at baseline to 16.9% at 24 months follow-up. Among those who had never previously used PrEP at baseline, the incidence of PrEP initiation was 10.1 per 100 person-years (95% CI 8.89-11.55). In multivariate analysis, factors independently associated with PrEP initiation included greater recent social engagement with gay men (IRR=1.24; 95%CI=1.12-1.36), 'chemsex' (i.e., the use of any drugs for sex) in the past 6 months (IRR=1.36; CI95%=1.03-1.81), greater number of sexual partners in the past six months (IRR=12.03; CI95%=4.41-32.82), receptive condomless anal intercourse (CLAI) with casual partners (IRR=1.89; CI95%=1.09-3.29), and CLAI with an HIV-positive boyfriend with detectable viral load (IRR=19.50; CI95%=4.47-45.47) in the past 6 months. After controlling for 'chemsex', methamphetamine use was not independently associated with PrEP uptake.

Conclusion:

Overall, most GBM accessing PrEP meet the current eligibility criteria, which included receptive CLAI with a casual partner, CLAI with an HIV-positive boyfriend with a detectable viral load, and using drugs for sex, although not specific to methamphetamine. PrEP prescribing guidelines should consider expanding these criteria to include recent chemsex among GBM which is not restricted to methamphetamine use.

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