

**“...IF YOU GET TESTED AND YOU ARE POSITIVE DOES THAT MEAN I’M GOING TO BASICALLY DIE?”
IMPROVING HIV AND SEXUAL HEALTH LITERACY AMONG GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN USING HOOK UP APP OUTREACH IN REGIONAL NSW.**

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Background: Hook up apps offer a unique health promotion opportunity to reach men who have sex with men (MSM) in regional areas. ACON’s Regional Outreach team sought to augment the team’s outreach conducted in regional areas by using Grindr to passively engage with regional MSM. Using an ACON branded profile between September 2016 and May 2017, 60 unique profiles connected over chat. Analysing these conversations identified common themes, gaps and opportunities in current health promotion work.

Analysis: The 60 conversations with valid responses were analysed for common themes based on the questions asked, which were found to broadly fit within one of six categories. In order of occurrence these were; Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), Risk, Testing, non-sexual health comments, non-sexual health questions, and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP).

Outcome: PrEP is the major driver of questions from MSM, reflecting a general awareness of and interest in PrEP. However, there are also opportunities for PrEP education and options for access.

The risks associated with oral sex are a repeated concern and questions of the HIV risk from oral sex demonstrated lower levels of sexual health literacy and an inflated perception of low-risk sexual activities.

Among those with lower sexual health literacy there is also an aversion to testing, either due to a fear of positive results or of testing itself.

Conclusions: This work has shown an awareness of contemporary HIV prevention strategies (i.e. PrEP) but also a knowledge gap in sexual health literacy among some MSM in regional NSW. App outreach as a health promotion tool is able to clarify sexual health information, guide MSM to sexual health clinics and strengthen confidence and knowledge of sexual health.

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