

ASIAN GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA WHO MAY BENEFIT FROM HIV PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS

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Background:

Asian gay and bisexual men (GBM), particularly those born overseas, are increasingly overrepresented in HIV notifications and late diagnoses in Australia.

Methods:

Using data from the 2015-6 Sydney Gay Community and Gay Asian Men's Periodic Surveys, we analysed characteristics of HIV-negative GBM who self-identified as Asian and engaged in 'at-risk' practices that would make them eligible for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). 'At-risk' for HIV was defined as: a) any condomless anal intercourse with casual partners or with an HIV-positive regular partner in the previous six months; b) recent methamphetamine use; c) diagnosis with any sexually transmitted infection in the previous 12 months.

Results:

A total of 1,049 HIV-negative Asian GBM were included in the combined analysis. Two in five Asian GBM (n=441, 42.0%) were classified as 'at-risk' of HIV infection. The most common reason to be classified as 'at risk' was condomless sex with casual partners (66.0%). The mean age of 'at-risk' Asian GBM was 32.1 years. The majority of individuals were born overseas (80.9%) and of these, most were ethnic Chinese (35.4%)

Although more than half of 'at-risk' Asian GBM (55.8%) reported knowing that PrEP was available, only 8.1% of them had used prescribed PrEP in the previous 6 months. For those defined as 'at risk' but who were unaware of PrEP, the majority (85.6%) had been tested for HIV in the previous 12 months.

Conclusions:

A substantial minority of Asian GBM appear to be at risk of HIV infection and may benefit from PrEP. Many Asian GBM who might benefit from PrEP remain unaware of it; this suggests an important role for service providers in providing PrEP-related health education and offering PrEP to at-risk Asian GBM.

Disclosure of interest statement:

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