



## **Why are gay and bisexual men in Australia choosing not to use PrEP? Results from the Flux Study**

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## **Background and aims PrEP use in Australia**

## Background and aims

### Background

- Gay and bisexual men (GBM) account for the majority of new HIV infections (~70%)
- PrEP is a highly effective biomedical prevention strategy
- Australia's national HIV strategy prioritises high risk GBM for HIV prevention
- High risk eligibility criteria
- PrEP has recently been approved for public subsidy

### Aim

- Explore reasons GBM choose not to use PrEP

# Methodology

## The Flux Study

## Methods and analysis

### The Flux Study

- Following Lives Undergoing Change
- A prospective observational study on licit and illicit drug use among GBM
- 4000 enrolled between 2014 and 2018

### Analysis

- Quantitative: Are any of the following reasons why you have not used PrEP (anti-HIV pills) to help prevent you from getting HIV?
- Qualitative: Would you like to tell us more about why you do not use PrEP (anti-HIV pills) to help prevent you from getting HIV?

## Results

# Why are GBM choosing not to use PrEP?

Why are gay and bisexual men choosing to not use PrEP?



## Reasons for non-use of PrEP

Factor	Does not meet eligibility criteria (n=538)	Meets eligibility criteria (n=84)
<b>Relevance/Eligibility</b>		
I'm not concerned about HIV	53 (9.9)	7 (8.3)
I prefer to use a condom **	134 (34.9)	9 (10.7)
I don't have sex with anyone who has HIV **	152 (28.3)	11 (13.1)
I rarely do anything risky ***	339 (63.0)	35 (41.7)
<b>Access</b>		
It's too expensive	67 (12.5)	17 (20.2)
I don't know where to get PrEP	77 (14.3)	18 (21.4)
<b>Negative normative</b>		
My friends told me I should NOT be using it	3 (0.6)	0 (0.0)
Condoms are more effective than PrEP in preventing HIV	50 (9.3)	4 (4.8)
I'm too embarrassed to ask for PrEP	39 (7.2)	9 (10.7)
<b>Adherence</b>		
It is difficult to take PrEP every day to prevent HIV	27 (5.0)	8 (9.5)
<b>Health consequences</b>		
I would be less likely to use condoms if I was taking PrEP	39 (7.2)	9 (10.7)
It doesn't protect me against other infections	149 (27.7)	20 (23.8)

\*\* p &lt; 0.01; \*\*\* p &lt; 0.001

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## Health consequences

- **Short and long-term side effects (n=50)**

*"It is a new drug and I am hesitant to start taking something until the impacts of long term use on my body have been better studied"*

- **Other conditions (n=20)**

- **STIs (n=19)**

- **Toxicity (n=30)**

*"I do not agree that taking a drug for a condition I don't have is better than taking a drug for something I do have. I am not into putting so much crap into my body every day"*

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## Conclusion


- Most men who believe PrEP is irrelevant to them do so correctly, but a small minority who believe they are not eligible actually are eligible.
- How warranted are the concerns of the men who cite the health consequences of PrEP as their reason for non-use? (Pilkington et al. 2018)

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## Thank you

**The Flux participants**  
All 3962 participants

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