

# IS IT DIFFERENT “OUT-BACK?” – THE QUEENSLAND PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS DEMONSTRATION (QPREPD) PROJECT AND SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIS)

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## Background:

Since QPrEPd started in November 2016, 3066 participants have been screened across 24 clinical sites across Queensland and there are currently 2280 active participants. Here we report on the prevalence of STIs in QPrEPd participants and the difference between metropolitan and regional areas.

## Methods:

At each review participants undergo blood testing for HIV and syphilis, urine PCR and pharyngeal and anal swabs for chlamydia and gonorrhoea if necessary.

## Results:

Out of all the screened participants, 14% reported that they have not had a HIV screening test within 3 months. So far we have not observed a marked difference between distinct STIs. To date, 8 participants have tested HIV positive at enrolment, 1 participant at 1 month and 1 participant at 9 months, due to not actively taking PrEP.

Approximately 80% of participants taking PrEP strongly agreed that STI checks were required every 3 months and this did not change based on location. Interestingly, we saw a reduction in the overall prevalence of STIs in regional areas compared to metropolitan sites. Our data showed a reduction from 15% of participants testing positive for STIs at the 1 month visit down to 10% at the 3 month visit and 8% at 6 months at regional sites. Whereas for metropolitan sites, STI rates have remained stable around 12% of participants over the same period. In parallel, there were less regional participants reporting 10+ partners in the previous 3 months compared to metropolitan participants, who also appear to get tested more regularly.

## Conclusion:

Over time we are seeing a difference in the STI prevalence pattern between regional and metropolitan areas. The preliminary results reveal that a concerning proportion of the population at high risk of HIV acquisition are still not following Australian STI guidelines by getting regular STI tests.

## Disclosure of interest statement:

No interest to declare