

PREFERENCES AND WILLINGNESS TO USE PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS FOR HIV AMONG MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN IN MAINLAND CHINA AND HONG KONG

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Background:

Pre-exposure prophylaxis(PrEP) uptake remains low in mainland China and Hong Kong. We examined preferences for different PrEP modalities among men who have sex with men(MSM) in mainland China and Hong Kong.

Methods:

We used data from PrEP APPEAL, a 15-country cross-sectional online survey about PrEP from May to November 2022, which included data from mainland China and Hong Kong. Eligible participants were aged ≥ 18 years, self-identified as MSM and self-reported as HIV-negative or unknown HIV status. Random forest models and SHAP(Shapley Additive ExPlanations) analysis were used to identify key factors influencing willingness and preferences for six PrEP options: daily oral, on-demand oral, monthly oral, 2-monthly injectable, 6-monthly injectable, and implantable PrEP.

Results:

Among 2,142 participants(mean age: 28.4 in mainland China, 34.7 in Hong Kong), current PrEP use was similar between mainland China and Hong Kong(18.0% vs. 17.8%, $p=0.93$), with an additional 10.5% and 8.0% reporting past PrEP

use($p=0.11$), respectively. A greater proportion of participants from mainland China preferred on-demand PrEP compared to those from Hong Kong(55.7% vs. 48.1%, $p<0.01$), while more participants from Hong Kong preferred monthly oral PrEP (53.2% vs. 47.3%, $p=0.02$). Willingness to use non-oral options was lower, with 2-monthly injectable PrEP preferred by 21.1%(19.1%-23.1%) in mainland China and 15.4%(12.3%-18.5%) in Hong Kong($p<0.01$). Among Hong Kong participants, condom use frequency and migration status were important predictors of willingness to use both oral and injectable PrEP options. Peer influence played a more significant role for Chinese participants. Current PrEP use status and PrEP attitudes were consistently important predictors. Individuals who preferred six-monthly injectable PrEP tended to dislike the two-monthly option.

Conclusion:

On-demand and monthly PrEP options remain the preferred choices, though the monthly option is neither proven nor available. However, the factors influencing these preferences vary, highlighting the need for tailored and targeted approaches to PrEP implementation.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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