



Arts & Social Sciences  
Centre for Social Research in Health

Gay Men Who Use Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis And Their Relationship Agreements: The Evolution Of Negotiated Safety?

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#HIVAUS18 #PrEP

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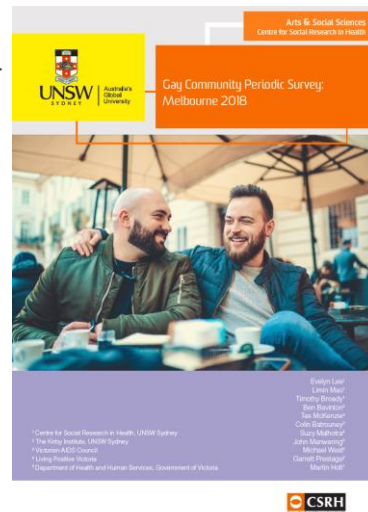
## Background

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- In Australia, 30-50% of GBM in relationships are sexually non-monogamous
- **Negotiated safety:** for HIV-negative seroconcordant couples, safer sex meant (Crawford et al., 2001; Kippax et al., 1997):
  - condomless sex with regular partner
  - maintained condom use with casual partners
- This strategy relies on **HIV testing**, mutual **knowledge** and **trust**, and open discussion of sexual behaviours with casual and regular partners
- PrEP raises the prospect that regular partners might have condomless sex within and outside the relationship without risking HIV infection
- This raises a number of questions about how these men negotiate safer sex in the era of biomedical HIV prevention
- PrEP use (and condomless sex with casual partners) may challenge notions of intimacy, trust, and the privileged status of (condomless) sex within dyadic relationships

## Participants and procedures

- Data were collected as part of [GCPS Melbourne 2018](#)—a community-based, cross-sectional survey
- Face to face recruitment at gay venues and events (paper-based survey) and online (study website)
- This study uses a sub-sample of 1,264 GBM (46.1% of total sample)
  - who reported a regular partner at time of survey, and
  - who were using PrEP, or
  - who reported their HIV-status as negative or untested/unknown



## Sample characteristics

- 1,264 participants
  - 293 (23.2%) HIV-negative and using PrEP
  - 900 (71.2%) men not using PrEP were HIV-negative, 57 (4.6%) unknown/untested
  - $M^{\text{age}} = 35.7$  years,  $SD=11.0$ , range 18—81
  - 71.1% Australian born
  - 94.9% gay-identified
  - 63.2% university educated
  - 71.8% full-time employed
- No statistically significant differences between PrEP users and non-PrEP-users across demographic variables



CAIC= Condomless Anal Intercourse with Casual partners

PrEP users in **BLUE** 

Non-PrEP-users OR non-users in **YELLOW**



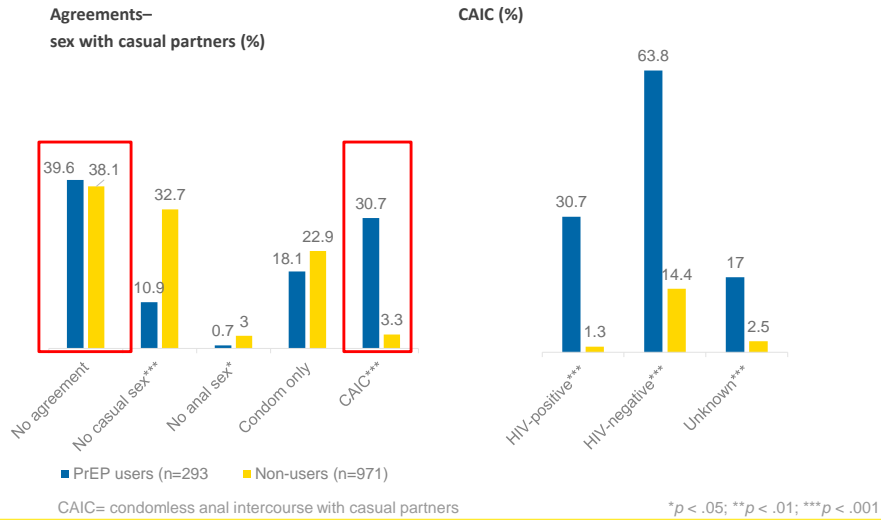
## Results

	PrEP users <i>n</i> =293	Non-users <i>n</i> =971	AOR	95% CI	<i>p</i> value
<i>No agreement</i> Agreement about CAIC	30.7%	3.3%	Ref 3.60	1.59–8.16	.002
Recent CAIC with: HIV-positive men HIV-negative men	30.7% 63.8%	1.3% 14.4%	4.05 2.41	1.82–9.021 1.48–3.90	.001 <.001
Recent CAIR	82.3%	67.6%	1.96	1.14–3.36	.01
No. of male sex partners in last six months	... 42.8% 6–20 30.8% >20	... 17.3% 6–20 5.1% >20	1.53	1.25–1.87	<.001
<i>HIV-negative regular partner</i> HIV-positive regular partner	12.8%	3.4%	Ref 3.03	1.41–6.49	.004
Recent PEP use (6 mths)	11.3%	2.5%	2.26	1.05–4.87	.04
Time since last HIV test	52.8% <4wks 44.1% 1-6mths ...	12.2% <4wks 30.2% 1-6mths ...	.38	.31-.47	<.001

\*Variables which were significant at  $p < .05$  (two-tailed) in multivariate analysis; dependent variable: PrEP use  
CAIC= condomless anal intercourse with casual partners  
CAIR = condomless anal intercourse with regular partner(s)



## Agreements & condom use



## Discrepant agreements PrEP-users

Any casual condomless sex (n & %) (n=204)	
No agreement (or no response) [n=116]	90 (44.1%)
No casual sex at all [n=32]	11 (5.4%)
No anal sex [n=2]	1 (0.5%)
Casual sex allowed with condom [n=53]	19 (9.3%)
Casual condomless sex allowed [n=90]	83 (40.7%)

Key 'discrepancies' among men with no agreement – potentially characteristic of 'implicit' agreements

CAIC= condomless anal intercourse with casual partners



# Discrepant agreements Non-PrEP-users

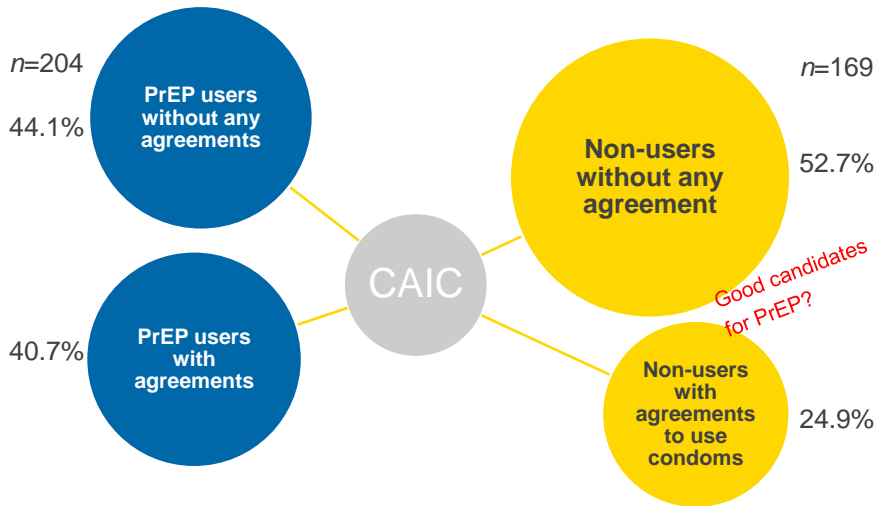
Any casual condomless sex (n & %) (n=169)	
No agreement (or no response) [n=370]	89 (52.7%)
No casual sex at all [n=318]	14 (8.3%)
No anal sex [n=29]	2 (1.2%)
Casual sex allowed with condom [n=222]	42 (24.9%)
Casual condomless sex allowed [n=32]	22 (13.0%)

Key discrepancies among men with no agreement, or an agreement to use condoms

CAIC= condomless anal intercourse with casual partners



# Key groups



CAIC= condomless anal intercourse with casual partners



## Summary and recommendations

- PrEP use by men in relationships is associated with condomless sex, number of sex partners, having an HIV-positive regular partner, PEP use
- Approx. half of the men engaging in condomless sex did not have an explicit agreement with their regular partner that allowed this
- Existing research suggests that non-monogamous couples with explicit rules are more satisfied in their relationships (Ramirez & Brown, 2010)
- Negotiating relational boundaries is not a one time process, but must take place whenever there are changes in circumstances (Zimmerman, 2012) – PrEP/UVL among broader community?
- Clinicians and counsellors will continue to play an important role in providing support to gay and bisexual men who navigate non-monogamous relationships (consensual or otherwise)
- E.g., in facilitating trust, open communication and disclosure about sexual behaviours



## Acknowledgments

- Thank you to all the GBM who participate in the GCPS
- GCPS research team:  
Tim Broady, Evelyn Lee, Limin Mao  
Ben Bavinton, Garret Prestage and  
Martin Holt
- Partner organisations: AFAO, NAPWHA and their member organisations
- Funding: Australian Government Department of Health and Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
- No conflicts of interest to declare.

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GAY COMMUNITY PERIODIC SURVEY

