

FROM CLICKS TO CARE: CLOSING THE HIV PREVENTION GAP FOR LGBTQ+ YOUTH IN BALI

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Background/Purpose:

LGBTQ+ youth under 24 in Bali face high HIV/STI risks, but stigma and financial barriers limit service access and retention. While digital campaigns drive initial visits—often reaching those in denial of orientation or anxious of status—sustained engagement remains low. This project aimed to bridge the gap between access and retention by providing free testing, PrEP options, and integrating mental health screening into a private clinic.

Approach:

Bali Medika Clinic ran consistent digital campaigns (3 posts/week) offering free HIV/Syphilis testing, funded by YIFOS, promoted offline through Yayasan Gaya Dewata peer networks. To support retention, mental health screening and government-supported Prep was integrated into the workflow. Program data from 2023 to 2025 were reviewed.

Outcomes/Impact:

Digital outreach (May 2023–Nov 2025) achieved 207,530 views, with engagement increasing from 248 views/post in 2024 to 1,082 in 2025. From very few prior youth visits, total LGBTQ+ youth visits reached 643 during the program, among which 122 individuals analyzed, 13.1% were HIV-positive and 23.8% syphilis-positive. Despite high risk awareness (>91%), PrEP uptake remained low (7.8%), highlighting a gap between awareness and sustained prevention. Barriers included internalized homophobia (54.9%), self-stigma (51.6%), and low disclosure to family (84.4%), alongside moderate to severe anxiety (19.7%) and depression (9%). After funding ended in late 2025, youth service uptake collapsed, highlighting dependence on continuous resources.

Innovation and Significance:

To address low retention, Bali Medika introduced a dual pathway PrEP model combining public government services with a private option, including online screening and education, HIV test verification and medication delivery (online). Free integrated online and offline mental health clinic referral with Bali Bersama Bisa were established to address stigma and psychosocial barriers. This model responds to youth needs for privacy, convenience, and holistic care, offering a scalable approach for HIV prevention among marginalized populations.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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