

COMBINATION HIV PREVENTION USE AMONG AN ONLINE SAMPLE OF GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

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Aim:

Combination HIV prevention is publicly funded in New Zealand and incorporates condoms, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and undetectable viral load (UVL). We explore self-reported combination HIV prevention use among gay, bisexual and other men who have sex (GBM) to assess progress.

Method:

We conducted a voluntary, anonymous cross-sectional survey in 2018 using social media and mobile dating applications targeted at GBM. This analysis focuses on participants reporting anal sex with a “casual” male partner in the previous six months. Participants were categorised into the following groups based on self-reported behaviour: “UVL”; “PrEP” (HIV-negative and on PrEP regardless of condom use); “Condom users” (HIV-negative and used condoms always or almost always); “None” (HIV-negative and used condoms less often). Fisher’s exact test was used to determine significant differences between groups.

Results:

Of the 1086 participants, 667 (61%) were eligible. The majority (59%) were “Condom users”, 19% used “PrEP”, 7% used “UVL” and 14% used “None”. Overall 86% reported at least one form of combination HIV prevention. Participants who used “None” combination prevention approaches were less likely to recall the Ending HIV social marketing campaign, reported fewer sexual partners and were more likely to live outside Auckland. Of HIV-negative participants reporting condomless casual sex, 28% were on PrEP and 48% were not but wanted to be.

Conclusion:

Engagement with combination HIV prevention is high among GBM in our sample. Lower than indicated PrEP uptake, differences by regions, and non-use of barrier methods with casual partners during an STI epidemic are areas of concern.