

A big thank you to the gay and bisexual men sharing their experiences in the NZPrEP study!

The study team would like to update you on initial findings and how your voices are already guiding decisions about PrEP in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Overall, participants did report behaviours placing them at high risk of HIV (in the absence of PrEP). Participants acknowledged they were vulnerable to HIV, believed PrEP was effective and were highly motivated to avoid infection.

Who took part?

150 gay and bisexual men aged from 18 to 55

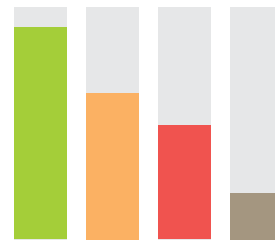
52% identified with a Maori, Pacific, Asian or other non-European ethnicity

Two-thirds self-referred into the study and a third were encouraged to take part by a doctor or nurse

Motivations for taking PrEP

Participants gave various reasons for taking part:

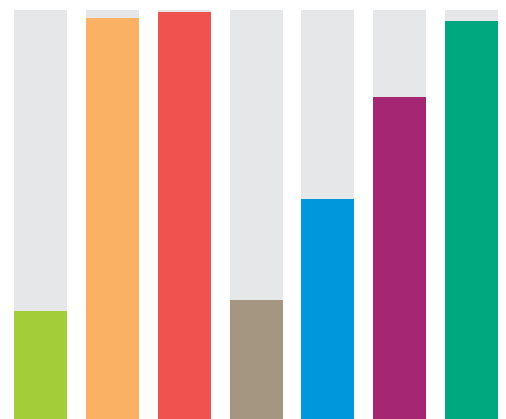
- 91% said “I wanted to do everything possible to prevent getting HIV”
- 63% said “I needed more HIV prevention options”
- 49% said “I’m comfortable people knowing I’m on PrEP”
- 20% said “my partner/s encouraged me”



Attitudes to PrEP at enrolment

At the beginning of the study, participants had these feelings about PrEP:

- A quarter (26.2%) felt they would have contracted HIV in the next few months without PrEP
- almost everyone (98%) said it was important to stay HIV negative
- all but one (99.3%) believed PrEP was effective at preventing HIV
- 28.9% worried about becoming too dependent on PrEP
- half (53.7%) reported feeling under pressure to not use condoms
- three quarters (78.5%) were worried about contracting STIs
- almost everyone (97.3%) said their overall clinic experience was extremely or somewhat positive



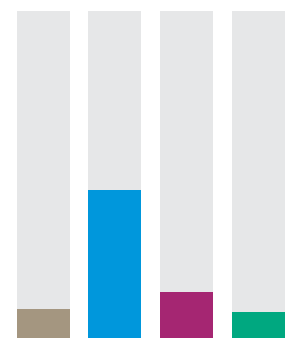
Behaviours

In the three months before the beginning of the study:

- the number of condomless receptive anal intercourse male partners reported by participants ranged between 0-50
- 10% of participants reported having condomless receptive anal intercourse with 10 or more men
- Almost half (46%) reported group sex
- 15% reported chemsex
- 9% had used PrEP before joining this study

0-50

range: number of condomless receptive anal intercourse male partners reported by participants



Sexually transmissible infections (STI)

In the 12 months *before* the study:

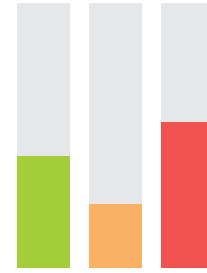
- 42% of participants had been diagnosed with a rectal STI (in the bum)

At the *beginning* of the study:

- 24% had an STI diagnosed at the first visit, including 18% with a rectal STI

6 months *into* the study:

- Over half (55%) had been diagnosed with a new STI by visit 4 (6 months in)



Your voices

Participants gave us valuable feedback in open-ended questions. Many men spoke about taking PrEP to protect sexual partners as well as to protect themselves (altruism). Several men said they wanted to play their part in ending the HIV epidemic in Aotearoa/New Zealand (community values). Others spoke about PrEP providing peace of mind. And some said that while they often did use condoms, PrEP provided a safety net for times when they didn't, or for when their judgement might be impaired.

Sharing the findings

We've shared initial study findings with a wide range of local and international audiences – your experiences are making a difference! So far:



18 seminars

to NZ health and scientific meetings
(e.g. PHARMAC, Sexual Health conferences,
National HIV Forum, HIV Treatments Update,
HIV Clinical Update)



4 presentations

to international conferences



2 scientific papers

Our goal is to continue producing practical, meaningful and high quality research as the study progresses.

Study partners

The NZPrEP study wouldn't be possible without you. But working alongside is Auckland Sexual Health Service, New Zealand AIDS Foundation, Body Positive and the Gay Men's Sexual Health group at the University of Auckland. We'd also like to thank the community pharmacies dispensing PrEP.

Funders include Gilead, NZ AIDS Foundation and PHARMAC.

Next steps

Every time you visit for follow up and complete a survey it adds more data. That builds a more complete picture of the real world PrEP experience that we can analyse and share.

We'll keep you posted as the study continues!

If you'd like to learn more about the findings so far please contact Dr Peter Saxton, University of Auckland, phone 09 373 7599 ext 81434 or email p.saxton@auckland.ac.nz

