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PrEP awareness, access and adherence: a qualitative exploration between three minority population groups in London

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What was this study about?

Background

2018: PrEP Champion Project (METRO, Positive East, Spectra and PrEPster) demonstrated gaps in PrEP knowledge and usage among key groups with a significant HIV risk.

Objective

To explore PrEP awareness, access and adherence among people from black African and Caribbean (BAC), Latin Gay, Bisexual and Men who have Sex with other Men (GBMSM) and trans and non-binary communities.



Methods

- Recruitment (Sept-Dec23): METRO Charity, Positive East and Spectra CIC agency networks

Participants	Black African and Caribbean (BAC)	Latin GBMSM	Trans
No of participants	14 (2FGs)	5	3
Gender	6 cis-males, 8 cis-females	5 cis-males	1 non-binary trans, 2 undisclosed
Sexuality	7 straight, 7 GBMSM	5 GBMSM	2 lesbians, 1 bisexual
Age	16-65yrs	24-31yrs	16-35yrs

- Participants were given information sheets and signed consent forms prior to focus group session. Reimbursed £50 each
- Sessions: trained facilitators, guided set of semi-structured questions. Sessions were recorded, transcribed and analysed thematically

Results: attitudes, towards, and awareness of PrEP

Black African and Caribbean

- ✓ Preventing HIV – additional protection
- ✓ Empowerment and mental health impact
- ✓ Physical health impacts
- ✓ Public health

Latin GBMSM

- ✓ Preventing HIV – regular testing
- ✓ Empowerment and mental health impact
- ✓ Physical health impacts
- ✓ Financial gain

Trans communities

- ✓ Preventing HIV – increased discussions
- ✓ Empowerment and mental health impact

... is about having to rely on your partner taking their [ART] medication all the time. [PrEP] is empowering the negative person to be in control of some of their sexual health and HIV status. (BAC)

With PrEP, there's been a lot more sexual freedom for everyone, for gay people (Latin)

Results: information dissemination, and access and receipt, of PrEP

Trans: Community outreach, online

Latin GBMSM: Community outreach, pharmacies, healthcare provider (SHCs)

BAC: Community outreach, pharmacies, online, healthcare provider (GPs)

...the more trans people that are out there talking about their experience, the better it is...at least seeing people who look and sound like yourself, sharing more about their experiences can be helpful (Trans)

I quite like the idea of a sexual health bus outside of schools (for year 11 upwards), colleges and universities to help raise awareness of PrEP and also to supply PrEP once all checks have been done (BAC)

I prefer the clinic because I have access to do everything, I get the medication...[and I] get the exams done.(Latin)

Key findings: barriers and facilitators to PrEP adherence

Barriers

- Side effects (BAC)
- Interaction with other medications (Latin GBMSM)
- Lifestyle (Latin GBMSM/Trans)
- Fear of shortages (Trans)

Facilitators

- Pill boxes or pill buddy (BAC/Trans)
- Alarms (BAC)
- Routine administration (BAC)
- Long-lasting injectables (BAC/Latin GBMSM)

I have ADHD and so organising several things...it's just so stressful to me. I already find it difficult to take my depression meds, hormones and other things, as well as getting the repeat prescriptions.
(Trans)

I would prefer an injectable PrEP, for sure, something that I could take, and it would last a month, three months because it's easier.
(Latin GBMSM)

Take home points & lessons learned

Increase awareness and expand PrEP access and receipt points

Barriers to PrEP adherence: side effects, potential drug interactions and busy lifestyles

Tailored community outreach

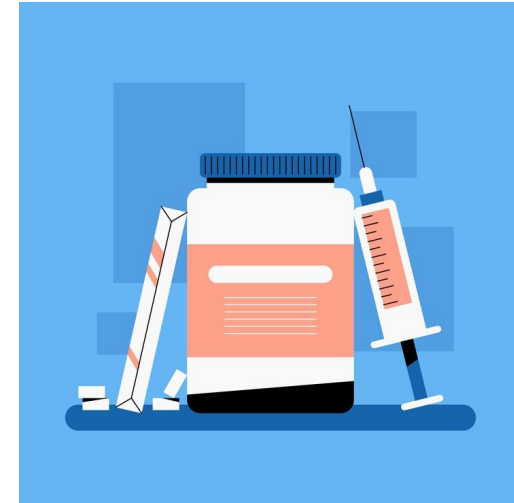


Call to action

Independent report

Roadmap for meeting the PrEP needs of those at significant risk of HIV

Updated 21 February 2024



Thank you

