

What are the PrEP and sexual health needs and experiences of young queer men in London?

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Rationale

- What is the data suggesting?
- Uptake of PrEP
- Need for a greater understanding

Methods

- Focus groups
- Eligibility
- Recruitment
- Structure

Findings

- Relationships to HIV and PrEP
- Barriers to PrEP Uptake
- Experiences and Perceptions of Sexual Health Services

Relationships to HIV and PrEP

- Acceptability of PrEP

“When I know I’m going to be more sexually active, I take PrEP for like two, three weeks, four weeks – whatever I feel like – and when that desire kind of fades down, I stop taking because I don’t see myself having sex.” (PrEP user)

- PrEP and HIV anxieties

“I’ve now got like the safety net of PrEP. I used to have a fear of [acquiring] it whereas now I know much more about being undetectable and the fact that transmission risk is effectively zero. And then with me taking PrEP, I feel like there’s enough science now that I feel like I’ve become educated on those things” (PrEP user)

Barriers to PrEP

- Stigma about PrEP

“A lot of the guys I’ve dealt with, let’s say like, a good 40% of them were DL. They were pretending they weren’t gay [...] I’d never see them getting on PrEP because they would see it as a pill that gay men would use.” (PrEP user)

- Access difficulties

“I haven’t been to a clinic before. I moved here two years ago. [...] It’s unnecessarily complicated. And especially for immigrants.” (Non-user)

- Perceptions of impact on the body

“I started taking it event based maybe like three years ago. And then once I started sleeping with more and more people for work, I then was like, “No, this makes sense for me to take it every single day.” But I was scared about what it could do to my liver.” (PrEP user)

Experiences and Perceptions of Sexual Health Services

- Confidence in sexual health services

“[At my clinic], I like the environment there, I feel like there’s no judgement there.” (PrEP user)

- Service access issues and impact

“In London, especially, it’s like gold dust trying to get these appointments.” (PrEP user)

- ‘Gaming’ the system and its barriers

“I know a lot of my friends around my age find it so difficult to be able to go to sexual health clinics when they need to because, you know, they’ve barely signed up for a GP let alone discovered where’s good and then the next thing you know, when you’ve got [symptoms] you don’t know where to treat it and no one can treat you because they don’t have space.” (PrEP user)

- Views on online testing

“But now I just prefer to test at home. It’s just easier, it’s quicker, I don’t have to go to the clinic, commuting there like half an hour and commuting back, waiting there. Appointments are pretty much impossible to get. One time I got to the walk-in clinic, was queuing up, they turned me away because there were too many people.” (PrEP user)

- Negative experiences of clinic care and organisation

“That’s how scared I was of getting HIV [...] I grew up in a very traditional African household, very Christian, very, “if you have sex with a man, you’re gonna catch HIV and you’re gonna die.” (PrEP user)

Discussion

- PrEP Promotion and Access
 - PrEP Promotion and HIV education
 - Improving access to PrEP
- Tailoring Work for Young People
- Sexual Health Beyond Clinics

Closing Statement

Thank You!

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