

CAN A CAMPAIGN EXPLAIN THE COMPLEXITIES OF HIV COMBINATION PREVENTION TO GAY MEN IN 90 SECONDS?

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BACKGROUND

HIV prevention campaigns have historically focused on a specific prevention strategy. HIV testing, HIV treatment, condoms and other prevention strategies have rarely been seen together in the one campaign.

However, with significant advancements in biomedicine, specifically regarding pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and treatment as prevention (TasP) as highly effective HIV prevention strategies, it presents an opportunity to communicate prevention as a combined approach.

Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM) are aware of condoms, how they work and how effective they are. They are also becoming more aware of the concepts of PrEP and TasP, but there are still a lot of questions gay, bisexual and other MSM have.

"How does PrEP work?"

"How is it 'safe' to have sex with a poz guy without a condom?"

"Do condoms fit in the picture anymore?"

PrEP and TasP are strategies that don't necessarily involve condoms and for a lot of gay, bisexual and other MSM, shifting the narrative from a condom every time message – can be an adjustment.

If we are to achieve our goal of ending HIV, it is important that gay, bisexual and other MSM are fully informed about other effective methods of prevention even if they may not necessarily involve condoms. Providing gay and bisexual men with a variety of HIV prevention options, whereby they can choose a strategy that works for them and their sexual partners.

The challenge we now face is this: can we position condoms, PrEP and TasP within the same campaign framework, promoting each strategy as highly effective at preventing HIV and if so, what does that look like?

APPROACH

In ACON's Ending HIV campaign How Do You Do It?, condoms, PrEP and TasP – communicated in the form of "undetectable viral load" or "UVL" – were positioned as being of equal validity and significance as HIV prevention strategies.

This combination HIV prevention strategy was the first of its kind that promoted more than one form of prevention.

The campaign consisted of various media formats but given the complexity of information regarding PrEP and TasP needing to be communicated, we developed a 90-second 'hero video' to encapsulate the combination HIV prevention approach.

The video featured three gay and bisexual men portraying users of each of the strategies and the styling was kept simple to focus on conveying the intricacies of the messages. It introduced them individually and then explained the benefits of each; how depending on the situation they may work together and how an individual may choose to use more than one at a time – specifically condoms and PrEP.

The three strategies were represented by three different-coloured 'o's in the campaign tagline "You choose" to reinforce the combination approach and to encourage gay and bisexual men and other MSM to actively choose a strategy that worked for them.

It was also important that the message of respecting other's choices was expressed. This was a key communication objective given the reluctance and generally negative attitudes some gay, bisexual and other MSM felt towards newer strategies that didn't involve condoms, and to address a stigma that was developing within the community towards PrEP users and HIV positive gay and bisexual men relying on TasP as their strategies.

Using Ending HIV's social media channels and a highly targeted strategy, the video was shared widely online and aimed to reach all sexually active gay and bisexual men and other MSM across New South Wales.

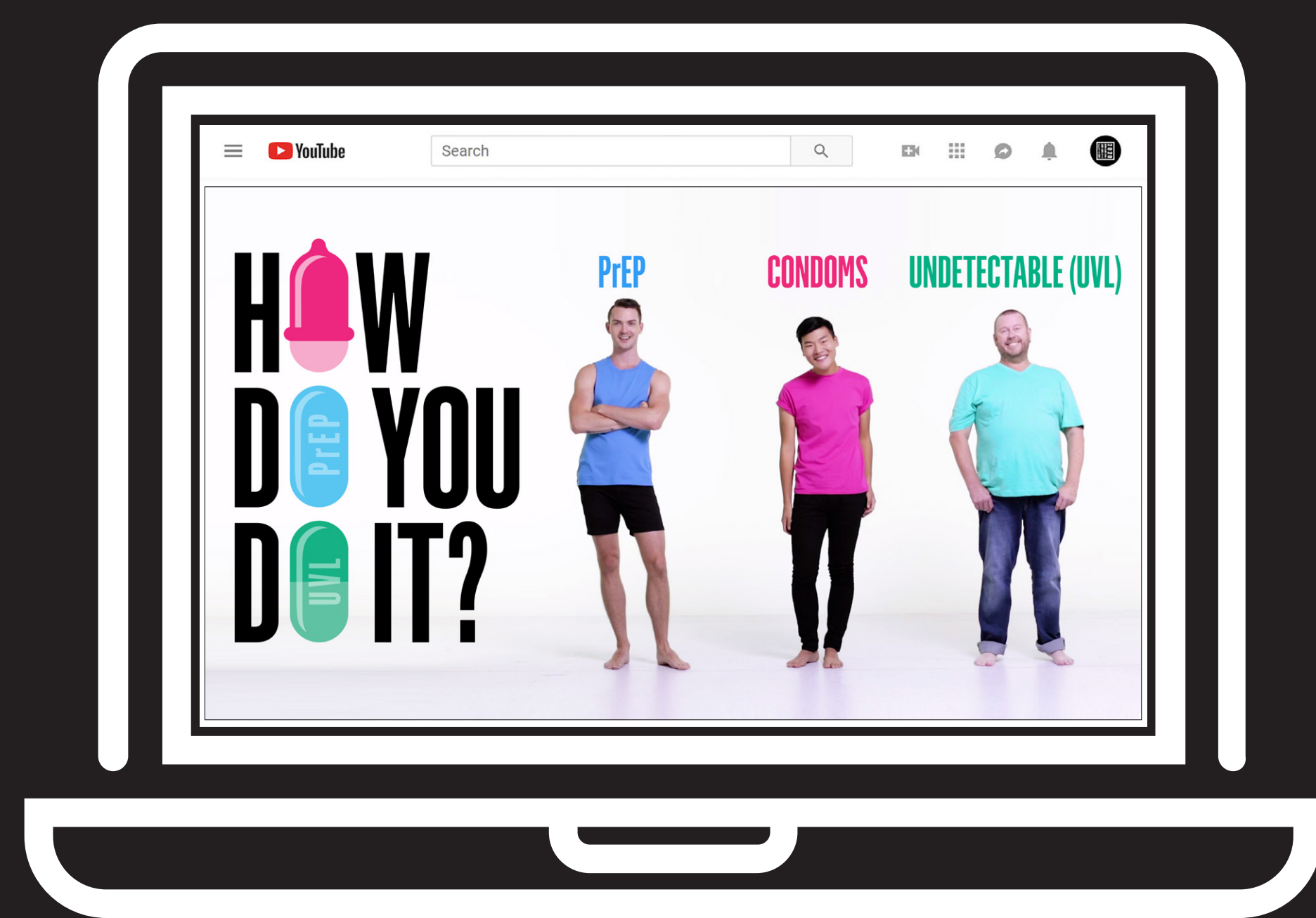
The campaign first ran in February 2017 for seven weeks and a second iteration ran in February 2018 for five weeks. Minor updates were made to the video for the 2018 iteration, but the messages remained the same.

IMPACT

An independent online evaluation of the campaign was conducted at the end of the first iteration in April 2017 (900 respondents) and then after the second iteration in April 2018 (632 respondents).

“Amazingly **bold and brave** campaign. Never before seen a HIV campaign so upfront about condoms **NOT** being the only option.”

FINDINGS FROM THE 2018 EVALUATION FOUND



88% THOUGHT THE VIDEO WAS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE AT COMMUNICATING ITS MESSAGE

66% SAID THE VIDEO WAS EXTREMELY ENGAGING OR VERY ENGAGING

39% OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS (VS 36% IN 2017 REPORT) HAD SEEN THE VIDEO PRIOR TO THE SURVEY. THIS IS THE BEST VIDEO RECALL RESULT FROM ANY ENDING HIV CAMPAIGN

180,095 VIDEO VIEWS

ACROSS DIFFERENT SOCIAL CHANNELS FROM BOTH CAMPAIGN PERIODS

INNOVATION AND SIGNIFICANCE

Communication of HIV prevention can go beyond promotion of just one strategy – and as the HIV prevention landscape continues to evolve we must embrace new, innovative approaches to engage and build sexual health literacy of gay and bisexual men and other MSM.

With an engaging design, the right media format and a targeted implementation strategy we can communicate complex health messages.

HOW DO YOU DO IT?

[TEST OFTEN] + [TREAT EARLY] + [STAY SAFE] = ENDING HIV 2020