Pre-exposure prophylaxis use and knowledge in young MSM in Aotearoa New Zealand

Jacek Kolodziej, Adrian Ludlam, Joe Rich
New Zealand AIDS Foundation

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Background/ aims and methods:

- PrEP is publicly funded in NZ, but the uptake has been lower than expected.

- Anecdotal evidence and overseas research suggests young MSM were experiencing more barriers to accessing PrEP.

- Ending HIV (or Big Gay Sex Survey) is an annual online survey organized by NZAF to track the changes in practices, knowledge, and attitudes of NZ key populations.

- The aim of the analysis (n=902) was to provide insight into the rates of PrEP use, and willingness to use PrEP among young MSM in NZ.

- The knowledge levels and attitudes around PrEP were assessed.
Results:

- The proportion of PrEP users lower among younger MSM vs MSM over 25 (10.2% vs 19.2%)

- Younger age significantly associated with less PrEP use, after controlling for ethnicity, region of residence, and source of recruitment (AOR=0.53, 95% CI: 0.30-0.92).

- Younger PrEP users were much more likely to access it through importing generics (AOR=5.00, 95% CI: 1.17-21.31), than through public funding or PrEP trial

- Overall, knowledge levels were comparable; young age associated with not knowing PrEP did not offer protection from STIs (AOR=0.57, 95% CI: 0.37-0.88).
Conclusions:

• Overall, two thirds of MSM in our sample wishes to use PrEP, or were currently using PrEP.

• Young MSM were as willing to use PrEP in NZ as their older counterparts.

• Barriers may exist hindering navigation in the public funding system – more research is needed to identify these.

• Specific interventions are needed to support young MSM in accessing PrEP.

*Ka pū te ruha, ka hao te rangatahi*

*When the worn out net lies heaped up, the new net goes fishing.*