

DO GAY MEN IN NSW BELIEVE WE CAN END HIV: AN ANALYSIS OF GAY MEN'S ATTITUDES BASED ON FIVE YEARS OF EVALUATION OF ENDING HIV

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Background:

Ending HIV (EH) is the first large scale campaign embodying the NSW HIV Strategy, leveraging the treatment as prevention approach (TasP) in order to mobilise gay and bisexual (GBM) men to end HIV transmission by 2020.

Since the inception of EH in early 2013, nine consecutive phases have been implemented and independently evaluated online. This presentation analyses ten campaign evaluation reports over five years.

Approach:

An independent consultant evaluated each phase of the EH campaign, including one baseline survey prior to the campaign launch. Responses of GBM to seven statements have been tracked over five years covering the importance of testing and early treatment, condom efficacy and finally: 'Everything has changed, we can now dramatically reduce HIV transmission.'

Each evaluation recruited more than 500 GBM men living in NSW, totaling more than 5,000 respondents in the analysis. Sample sizes were similar across the ten surveys in terms of age groups, HIV status and locations.

Outcomes:

Significant increases in GBM indicating they agree or strongly agree with attitude statements supporting ending HIV transmission in NSW; 'Everything has changed, we can now dramatically reduce HIV transmission.' Increased from 48% prior to launch of EH, Feb 2013 to 87% in March 2018.

Further 'HIV treatments significantly reduce the risk of passing on HIV.' Increased from 33%, Feb 2013 to 84% in March 2018, with the biggest shift among HIV negative GBM responses.

Significance:

In order to achieve an end in HIV transmissions, we need to engage GBM through innovative and engaging messaging and instill a belief that HIV prevention strategies including biomedical technology will be effective at ending HIV infections.

The analysis of this five year evaluation demonstrates that GBM not only believe that it is possible, but they agree it is achievable.