

HIV PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS: KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

Authors:

Lane W¹, Heal C¹, Banks J¹

¹ James Cook University, Australia

Background:

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) has been accepted by the Australian Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme on the 1st of April 2018. With General Practitioners (GPs) now being the major prescribers of this intervention, assessment of these physicians' knowledge and attitudes towards PrEP were assessed in this study.

Methods:

Quantitative: General Practitioners in the Mackay region were assessed of their knowledge and attitudes towards HIV PrEP through a content-validated and piloted questionnaire.

Qualitative: General practitioners undertook fifteen to twenty minute individual in-depth interviews to assess their knowledge and attitudes towards HIV PrEP.

Results:

Quantitative: Forty-five out of one hundred and nine general practitioners (41.1%) responded to the questionnaire. General practitioners had limited knowledge regarding PrEP, with the practitioners placing this as their largest concern towards PrEP prescription. Only one third of practitioners had previously heard of PrEP, with 71.4% indicating discomfort with its prescription. Formalised guidelines were indicated as the most important method to increase prescription confidence.

Qualitative: Ten general practitioners were interviewed until data saturation occurred. General themes were positivity towards HIV PrEP and discomfort. Positivity included subthemes of excitement preparedness to further their knowledge on PrEP through education. Discomfort included subthemes of hesitancy to initiate discussion of PrEP with patients, concern over their lack of knowledge and simply *"not wanting those kind of people in their practice."*

The final results will be reported at the conference.

Conclusion:

General practitioners had overall positivity towards HIV PrEP. There was limited knowledge towards PrEP which was the practitioners biggest concern. There was still discomfort towards PrEP from some GPs, which could potentially be overcome through formalised guidelines and education. With overall positivity towards the prophylaxis, future implementation of the prophylaxis will provide to be beneficial for both individuals and society alike.

Disclosure of interest

No pharmaceutical grants were received in the development of this study.