

Gay and bisexual men exposed to PrEP social marketing campaigns had higher awareness and knowledge of PrEP dosing regimens

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Background: Community-based organisations conducted large-scale social marketing campaigns in Australia to promote pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in January-February 2021. This analysis aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the social marketing campaigns in upskilling GBM on how to take PrEP and increasing awareness of ED-PrEP

Methods: We conducted an online cross-sectional survey in March-April 2021 and recruited participants using Facebook. We compared PrEP awareness, knowledge, and attitudes between GBM who had seen or not seen recent PrEP campaigns using bivariate logistic regression.

Results: Of 543 GBM who completed the survey, 175 (32.2%) had seen campaigns and 368 (67.8%) had not. Those who had seen campaigns were more likely to have heard of PrEP compared to those who had not (97.7% versus 89.4%, odds ratio [OR]=5.08, 95% confidence interval [CI]=1.79-14.60) and to have taken PrEP ('PrEPexperienced'; 68.6% versus 35.6%, OR=3.95, 95%CI=2.69-5.79). Among the 499 men who had heard of PrEP, those exposed to campaigns were more likely to be aware of event-driven PrEP (86.6% versus 57.1%, OR=4.84, 95%CI=2.95-7.92) and to have correct knowledge of how to take event-driven PrEP (50.0% versus 35.6%, OR=1.81, 95%CI=1.16-2.83). Those who had seen campaigns were more likely to believe that both daily oral PrEP (93.5% versus 76.3%, OR=4.45, 95%CI=2.29-8.67) and event-driven PrEP (68.1% versus 38.5%, OR=3.41, 95%CI=2.28-5.11) are effective at preventing HIV.

Conclusion: GBM who saw PrEP social marketing campaigns had consistently higher PrEP awareness and knowledge. As PrEP uptake increases, it is critical that information about PrEP availability, dosing regimens, and how to take PrEP correctly is conveyed. Community-based PrEP campaigns are crucial in PrEP implementation through empowering and upskilling individuals to effectively take PrEP to prevent HIV. We recommend the continued implementation of tailored PrEP social marketing campaigns to populations at risk of HIV.

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