



Analysing progress in the national HIV PrEP cascade by Australian gay and bisexual men: results from the PrEPARE Project 2017–21

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Background

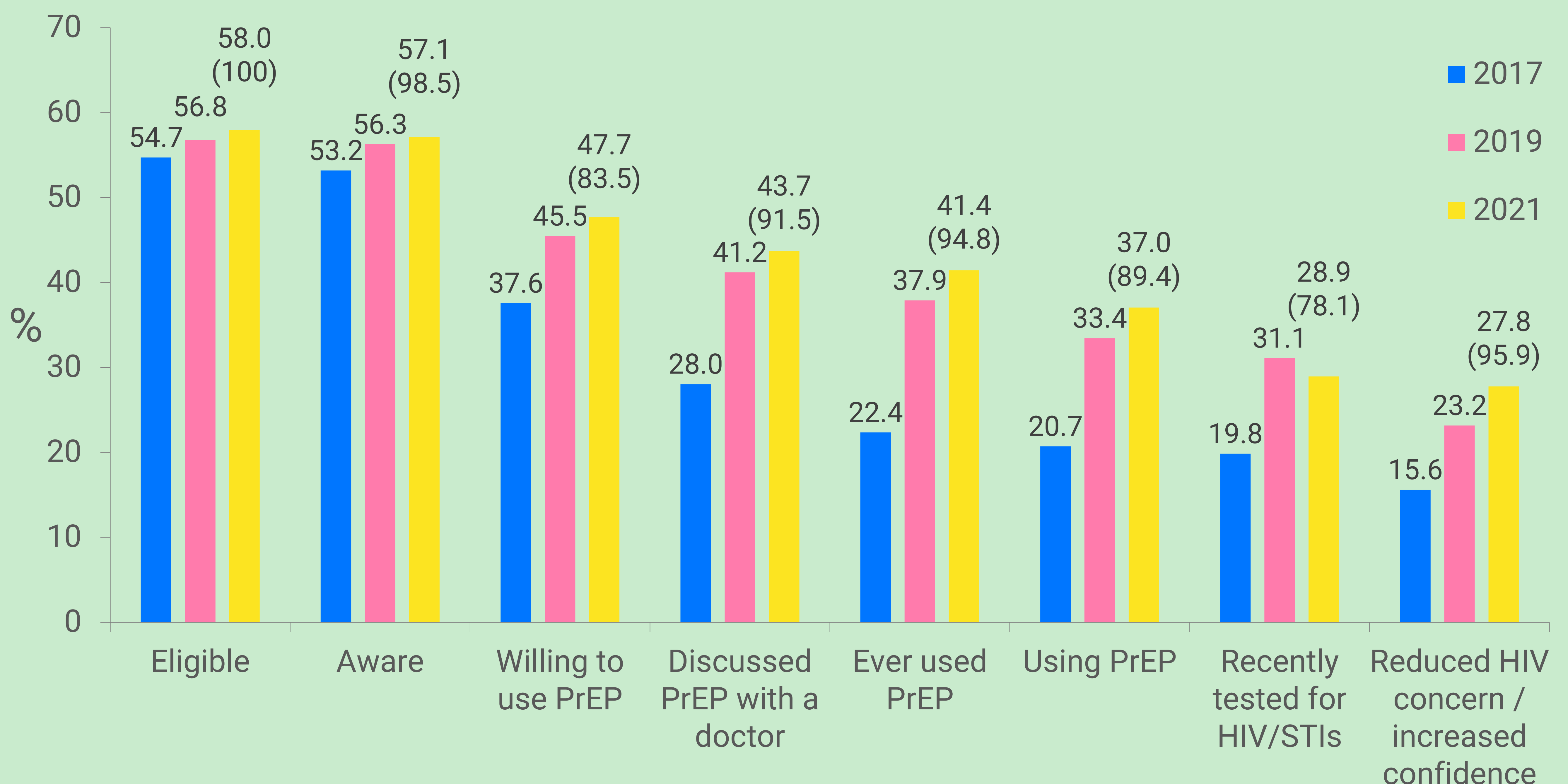
We developed an HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) cascade to assess coverage and barriers to use among Australian gay and bisexual men. We revised the cascade in line with PrEP suitability criteria (ASHM, 2019) to assess progress and gaps in uptake.

Methods

Online surveys of gay and bisexual men (GBM) were conducted every two years across Australia, with advertising on Facebook, Instagram and Grindr in 2021. Responses from HIV-negative and untested participants were included. Trends in each cascade step were calculated. Reasons for not using PrEP at the biggest drop off in the cascade are reported.

Results

3,371 responses from HIV-negative and untested GBM were included (1038 in 2017, 1148 in 2019, 1185 in 2021). Recent PrEP use increased from 23.3% in 2017 to 44.2% in 2021. In 2021, 76.3% of PrEP use was daily and 19.7% on-demand. There was improvement in most cascade steps:



Fewer PrEP users reported recent HIV/STI testing in 2021. The biggest drop off in the cascade remains willingness to use PrEP. For eligible, aware but unwilling participants in 2021, reasons for not using PrEP included not having enough sex (36.9%), concern about side effects (39.6%) or taking long-term medication (35.1%).

Conclusion

There has been significant improvement in the PrEP cascade with increased willingness to use it, discussions with doctors, and overall PrEP coverage. Recent testing by PrEP users has become less common, possibly reflecting COVID-19 and more non-daily use. Providing supportive, low-threshold pathways to access PrEP and discuss its use remains important for some GBM.



Disclosure of Interest Statement

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