

# **NEWLY ARRIVED ASIAN-BORN GAY MEN IN AUSTRALIA: EXPLORING MEN'S HIV KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, PREVENTION STRATEGIES AND FACILITATORS TOWARD SAFER SEXUAL PRACTICES.**

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## **Background:**

Asian-born gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (gbMSM) newly arrived in Australia are more than four times as likely than their Australian-born counterparts to be diagnosed with incident HIV. Our aim was to explore experiences of Asian-born gbMSM recently arrived in Australia and their knowledge of and preference for HIV prevention strategies.

## **Methods:**

Twenty-four gbMSM aged 20-30 years attending Melbourne Sexual Health Centre who were born in Asia and arrived in Australia in the preceding four years, participated in semi-structured face-to-face interviews. Men were excluded if they were living with HIV. Interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically.

## **Results:**

Men reported little knowledge of HIV prevention strategies outside of condom use prior to coming to Australia. Although participants reported basic knowledge of HIV transmission and treatment, exposure to sexual identity and HIV-related stigma in their countries of birth meant they imagined a HIV diagnosis would be devastating. Most relied on condoms to stay HIV negative however their consistency of use varied. Seven men were on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP); all but one started PrEP after coming to Australia. Many indicated interest in PrEP but described it as too expensive as they do not have access to government-subsidized healthcare. Sexual health counselling and connections with LGBTQI community groups appeared to facilitate PrEP and consistent condom use.

## **Conclusion:**

Asian-born gbMSM newly-arrived to Australia may have limited knowledge of HIV prevention strategies aside from condom use. Increased connections with sexual health services and LGBTQI communities may facilitate more effective HIV prevention strategies.

## **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

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