



# Use of HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) associated with lower HIV related anxiety among Australian gay and bisexual men who are at high risk of HIV infection

Keen P & Hammoud MA, Bourne A, Bavinton BR, Vaccher S, Holt M, Grulich A, Saxton P, Jin F, Maher L, Haire B, Prestage G

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## Background

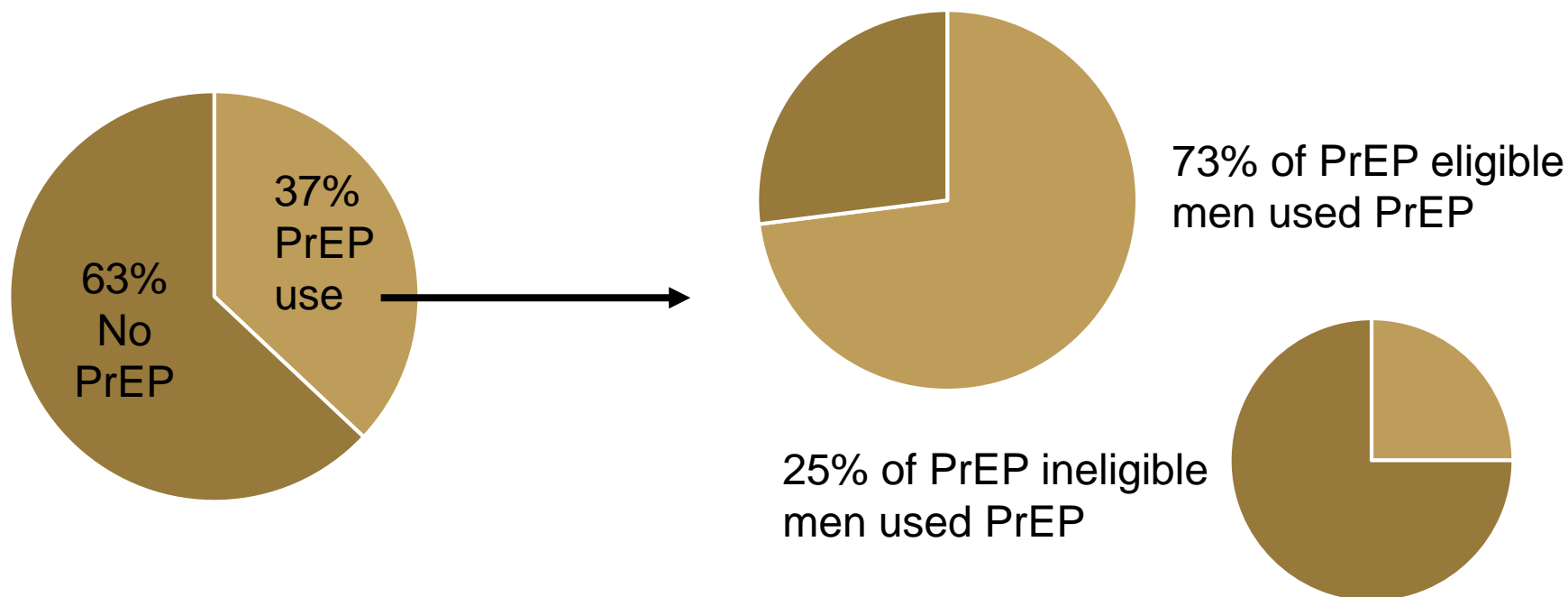
- Many gay and bisexual men (GBM) report sex-related HIV anxiety, particularly during condomless anal intercourse with casual partners (CLAIC)
- PrEP is a highly effective biomedical HIV prevention strategy which may reduce HIV-related anxiety

## Study objective

- Does PrEP use reduce HIV-related anxiety among high and low-HIV-risk GBM?

## Methods

- In 2018, 1,574 non-HIV-positive men completed a *Flux* survey and answered questions about PrEP use and sexual behaviours
- Risk was assessed based on the Australian PrEP eligibility criteria
- Measured HIV-related anxiety on a newly-developed scale
  - After sex I sometimes get concerned I might have done something risky
  - I sometimes worry about HIV before having sex
  - When I'm having sex HIV tends to come to mind
- Multivariable logistic regression was used to estimate adjusted odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals for factors associated with PrEP use



- High-HIV risk (i.e. PrEP eligible) men who reported PrEP use had significantly lower HIV-related anxiety scores than non-PrEP users
  - Mean: 8.54 vs 10.42; aOR=0.91 (95%CI=0.85-0.97)
- Mean HIV-related anxiety was 8.85 (SD 4.01); 17% had no HIV anxiety
- Higher HIV-related anxiety was associated with:
  - Being aged  $\leq 25$  years (mean=9.59 vs. 8.35,  $p < 0.001$ )
  - Reporting receptive CLAIC (mean=9.59 vs. 8.74,  $p = 0.033$ )

- PrEP use was independently associated with lower levels of HIV-related anxiety among men at high risk of HIV (“PrEP eligible”)
- PrEP use was not associated with anxiety among PrEP ineligible men – lower anxiety levels may be related to less ‘risky’ behaviours
- Reduced HIV-related anxiety is an additional benefit of PrEP use that could be highlighted in demand creation initiatives to increase PrEP uptake