

PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN ATTITUDES REGARDING HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS – A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Background:

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) is a novel anti-retroviral therapy used as a prevention strategy for those at high risk of HIV transmission.

Methods:

A systematic review was conducted of primary care physicians' attitudes toward HIV PrEP following PRISMA guidelines. The Downs & Black and COREQ assessment tools were utilised for quality assurance. The systematic review was registered in the PROSPERO database. Searches were conducted in MEDLINE, CINAHL, SCOPUS and COCHRANE databases.

Results:

The search produced 1,148 articles, of which 7 fulfilled the inclusion criteria. Studies identified varied perceptions held by physicians towards HIV PrEP, with assessment of attitudes fitting into three broad categories: physician perceptions, barriers to HIV PrEP uptake by physicians and recommendations for future implementation. Results indicated positive attitudes towards PrEP. Side-effects were demonstrated to have the most influence on barriers to uptake. The existence of formalised guidelines from a recognised institution was identified as the most influential factor on future uptake by physicians.

Discussion:

Primary care physicians' attitudes towards PrEP are generally positive, although few have substantial experience in prescribing and there are barriers to uptake such as side effects and concerns regarding resistance. Further training is required to increase awareness, as knowledge of PrEP was associated with positive attitudes and an increased willingness to prescribe the prophylaxis.

Conclusion:

There is a paucity of evidence in primary care physicians' attitudes towards HIV PrEP. More research into this area is required to understand barriers to uptake and implement strategies to improve attitudes and uptake of HIV PrEP.