

Reasons for Declining PrEP Referrals among Gay, Bisexual and Other Men Who Have Sex With Men (gbMSM) at PRIMP study Implementation Sites in Toronto



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Background:

- PRIMP is an ongoing CIHR-funded implementation science study in which sexual/public health clinic staff routinely recommend PrEP to gbMSM meeting evidence-based criteria
- We assessed the proportion of gbMSM declining PrEP referrals, and the reasons behind declining referrals, at 6 study sites in Toronto

Methods:

- We reviewed PrEP assessment forms routinely used to assess PrEP eligibility among gbMSM clients of Toronto PrEP referral sites between December 1 2018 – November 30 2019
- For gbMSM who declined PrEP referrals despite meeting criteria (syphilis, rectal gonorrhea/chlamydia, recurrent PrEP use, HIRI-MSM score ≥ 25), and who were not HIV-positive or already on PrEP, staff could select from four potential reasons or respond “other” and provide a written explanation
- We coded qualitative responses and summarized results using descriptive statistics
- If multiple reasons were given, the most important reason was recorded according to a hierarchy of reasons we developed post-hoc

Results

- Total number of eligible clients offered a PrEP referral: 653
- Proportion of clients offered a PrEP referral who declined: 50%
- Of those who declined, 11.5% declined because they had already been referred to a PrEP provider
- Reasons for declining PrEP are reported in Table 1 (see next slide)

Table 1. Reasons for Declining PrEP referrals

Reasons for Declining PrEP referral	% of clients who declined referral
Did not feel at risk for HIV	31.1%
Not interested in PrEP	16.6%
Medication costs of PrEP	13.5%
Already referred elsewhere for PrEP	11.5%
Needing time to consider/learn about PrEP	5.9%
Concerns regarding potential side effects	5.1%
Not specified	4.3%
Lack of provincial health coverage	3.9%
Being a visitor or emigrating from Canada imminently	1.8%
Desire to defer decision until HIV "window period" had passed	1.1%
Entering a monogamous relationship	1.1%
Other	1.0%
Previously stopping PrEP for an unknown reason	0.9%
Previously experiencing side effects on PrEP	0.6%
Electing to use condoms instead	0.6%
Inability to attend PrEP appointments due to distance	0.6%
Inability to attend PrEP appointments due to time constraints	0.2%

Limitations

- Unable to incorporate data from all PRIMP sites and cities at time of analysis
- Total sample may not all represent unique individuals since data were anonymous
- The underlying reasons that clients who declined a PrEP referral because they “did not feel at risk,” may not have been captured by this data. Further qualitative studies, including studies that are part of PRIMP, may help to elucidate this

Conclusions

- PrEP uptake among Toronto gbMSM meeting guideline criteria could be increased by approximately 50% by:
 - providing universal access to PrEP medication and care
 - improving PrEP awareness and self-assessment of HIV risk

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- I have no conflicts of interest