

Awareness and Uptake of HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Among Gay and Other Men Who Have Sex With Men in Ontario

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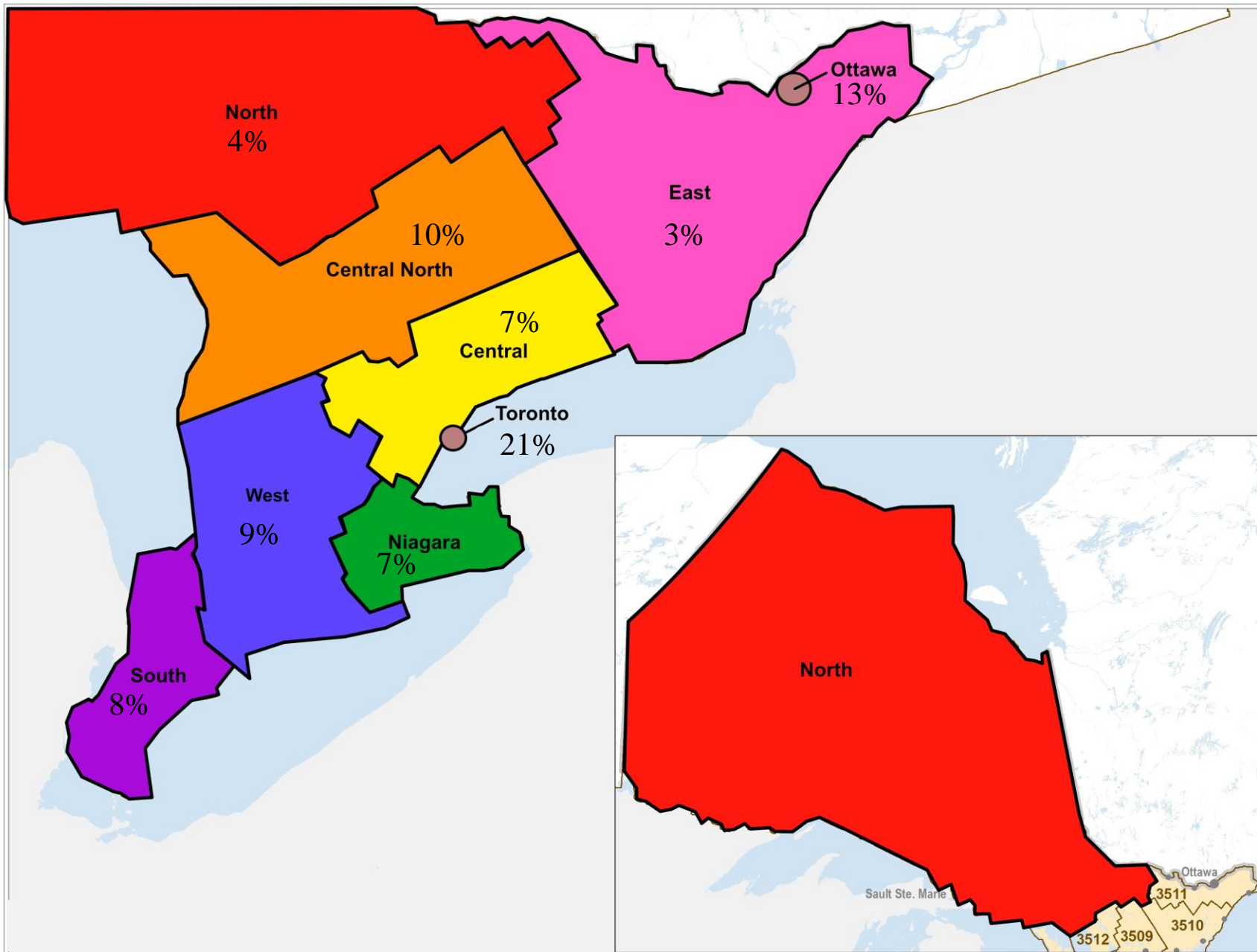


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Introduction: Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM) account for the majority of HIV infections in Canada. Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), the use of antiretroviral medications, specifically tenofovir/emtricitabine, has been shown to prevent HIV infection with an efficacy near 100%. Since Health Canada approval in 2016, the number of GBMSM taking PrEP has grown steadily but remains low.

Methods: Data were collected from an anonymous online survey conducted from June 2018 to March 2019. Recruitment was by network and snowball sampling. Analyses were conducted using SPSS Statistics Version 24.0.

Respondents: A total of 1565 HIV negative GBMSM completed the survey. The mean age was 37.3 years (SD = 14.7). Most participants had sex with only or mostly men (95%), most had completed postsecondary schooling (79.8 %) and 26% had an annual income >\$80,000.



Proportion of GBMSM by region currently taking PrEP:

Toronto: 21%

Ottawa: 13%

Central North: 10%

West: 9%

South: 8%

Central: 7%

Niagara: 7%

North: 4%

East: 3%



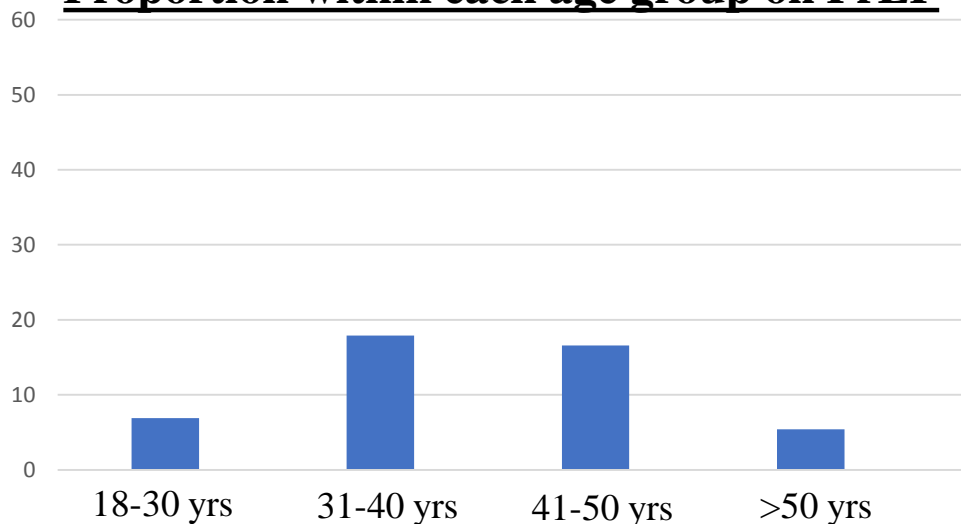
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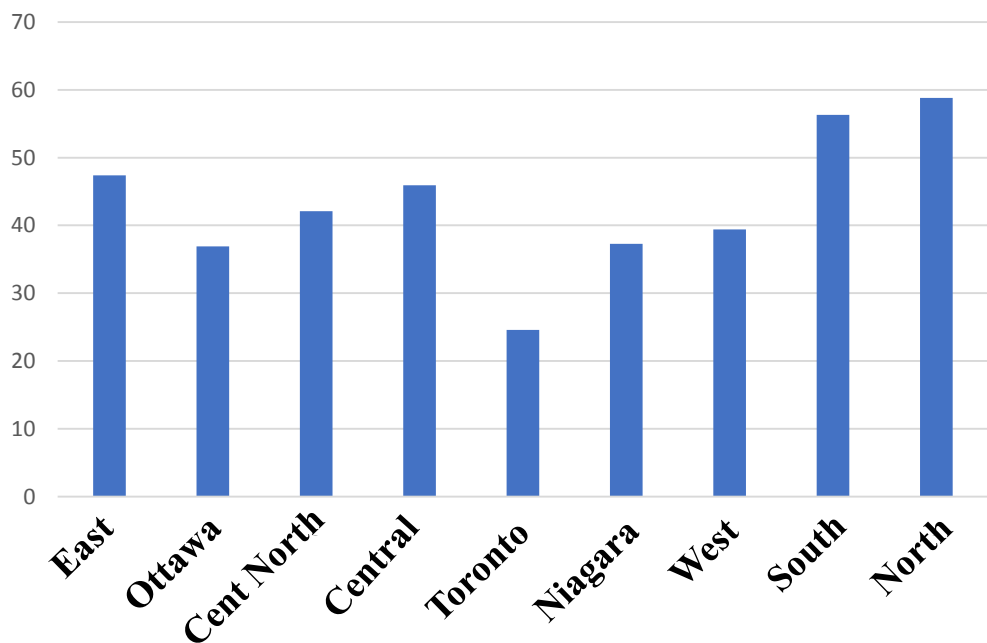


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Proportion within each age group on PrEP



Proportion by region: Never heard of PrEP or know little.



Total survey respondents

	<u>N (%)</u>
I have never heard of it.	191 (12.2%)
I am aware of it but don't know much about it.	447 (28.6%)
I am aware of it but am not interested in using it.	360 (23%)
I am thinking about using it but haven't decided yet.	177 (11.3%)
I would like to use it but don't know where to get it.	93 (5.9%)
I would like to use it but can't afford it	104 (6.6%)
I am currently taking it.	160 (10.2%)
I have used it but am not using it anymore.	33 (2.1%)
Total	1565 (100%)
Major or some concern over cost	989 (63.2%)
Major or some concern over side effects	919 (58.7%)

Conclusions

PrEP in Ontario:

- PrEP use remains low at 10% of GBMSM respondents
- PrEP uptake is highest in Toronto and Ottawa, and lowest in northern and eastern Ontario
- PrEP uptake is highest among urban middle-aged GBMSM
- Lack of awareness of PrEP remains high in most parts of Ontario
- Concerns over cost and side effects remain potential barriers.



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