



Access to prevention in different settings

OC 58 IS PREP KNOWLEDGE A PRIVILEGE? THE UNEQUAL ACCESS TO PREP INFORMATION FOR CIS AND TRANS WOMEN AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING INDIVIDUALS AT HIV TESTING SITES

C. Del Giudice¹, M. Barracchia², B. Botros Abd El Malek², R. Pignata², M. Stizioli²

¹Anlaidis Torino, Torino, Italy, ²Brescia Checkpoint, Brescia, Italy

Background: In Italy, the majority of PrEP users are gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM), while other populations - cisgender women, transgender women, transgender men and non-binary individuals with a cervix - face considerable barriers in accessing PrEP information and services. This study explores potential barriers to PrEP awareness and HIV testing for these populations. The initial hypothesis was that these groups are not being adequately informed about PrEP when tested for HIV.

Materials and Methods: To validate this hypothesis, Brescia Checkpoint and Anlaidis Torino conducted a survey targeting cisgender women, transgender women, transgender men and non-binary individuals with a cervix. It was distributed across multiple regions and informal networks, including social media and community-based platforms. The responses were collected through Google Forms. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The survey complied with GDPR regulation.

Results: A total of 765 respondents participated in the survey (Table 1), with 56.3% not having been tested for HIV in the past two years, mainly due to lack of knowledge on where or how to get tested (37.1%), absence of recent sexual activity (23%), fear or shame (21.1%), the misconception that monogamy is a protection (18.1%), and lack of time (16.5%) as described in Figure 1.

Among those tested, 72.2% were not informed about PrEP by testing providers (Table 2). Only 20% of those tested in STI/infectious disease departments had access to information. In contrast, checkpoints were more effective, with 55% receiving PrEP-related guidance. However, HIV associations provided information to only 29% of those tested. Indeed, insufficient information (32.9%) is one of the key factors preventing these populations from initiating PrEP, along with no perceived risk (34.8%) and socioeconomic barriers (33.5%) as displayed in Figure 2.

Twelve people of all respondents reported using PrEP.

Conclusion: This study confirms our initial hypothesis that these populations are not being adequately informed about PrEP, particularly in institutional healthcare settings. Checkpoints' work to inform cisgender women, transgender women, transgender men and non-binary individuals with a cervix about PrEP remains insufficient.

It is crucial that STI/infectious disease departments, together with the Italian HIV community, join forces to expand HIV testing awareness and provide comprehensive PrEP education and combination prevention counseling to ensure equitable HIV prevention access for all.

Attach: https://www.icar2025.it/upload/abstractAttach/Attach_ABS_32.jpg

Table 1. Survey respondents demographics and responses according to testing in the last 2 years					
	Tested		Not tested		Total
N.	334	43,7%	431	56,3%	765
Geography area					
North	263	78,7%	283	65,7%	546
Centre	44	13,2%	76	17,6%	120
South	15	4,5%	44	10,2%	59
Islands	12	3,6%	28	6,5%	40
Age					
18 - 24	54	16,2%	106	24,6%	160
25 - 34	198	59,3%	215	49,9%	413
35 - 44	73	21,9%	84	19,5%	157
45 - 54	8	2,4%	15	3,5%	23
55 - 64	1	0,3%	9	2,1%	10
65 - 74	0	0,0%	2	0,5%	2
Gender Identity					
Cisgender woman	228	68,3%	310	71,9%	538
Non-binary person, Bigender person	38	11,4%	43	10,0%	81
Transgender man	14	4,2%	19	4,4%	33
Genderqueer or genderfluid person	16	4,8%	16	3,7%	32
Transgender woman	18	5,4%	14	3,2%	32
Questioning	9	2,7%	13	3,0%	22
I prefer not to reply	6	1,8%	9	2,1%	15
Agender person	5	1,5%	7	1,6%	12
Sex assigned at birth					
Female	312	93,4%	418	96,5%	728
Male	17	5,1%	13	3,0%	30
Intersex	3	0,9%	0	0,0%	3
I prefer not to reply	2	0,6%	2	0,5%	4
Sexual orientation					
Heterosexual	88	26,3%	182	42,6%	250
Bisexual	87	26,0%	94	21,8%	181
Pansexual	64	19,2%	47	10,9%	111
Lesbian	24	7,2%	42	9,7%	66
Queer	29	8,7%	34	7,9%	63
Questioning	11	3,3%	21	4,9%	32
Asexual	9	2,7%	13	3,0%	22
Fluid	14	4,2%	3	0,7%	17
I prefer not to reply	3	0,9%	6	1,4%	9
Gay	2	0,6%	2	0,5%	4
Demisexual	1	0,3%	4	0,9%	5
Aromantic	1	0,3%	2	0,5%	3
Polysexual	1	0,3%	1	0,2%	2
Work Situation					
Employee	155	46,4%	194	45,0%	349
Student	72	21,6%	108	25,1%	180
Self-employed	54	16,2%	79	18,3%	133
Unemployed	32	9,6%	35	8,1%	67
Sex Worker	18	5,4%	4	0,9%	22
Retired	0	0,0%	3	0,7%	3
PhD student and research scholar	2	0,6%	5	1,4%	8
Homemaker	1	0,3%	2	0,5%	3

Figure 1. Main reasons for not getting tested in the last 2 years

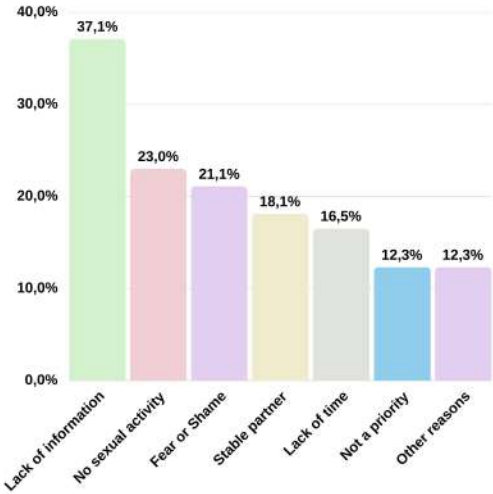


Figure 2. Factors Preventing PrEP Initiation

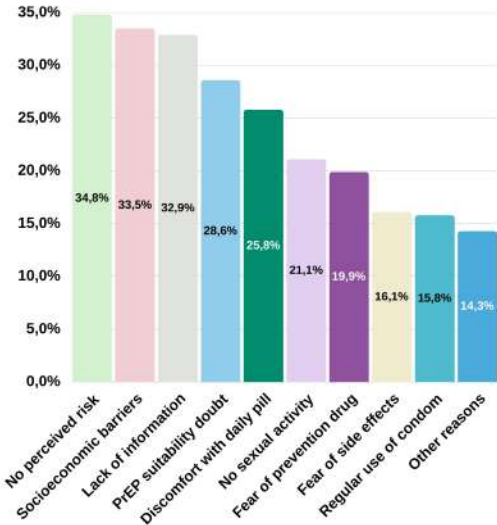


Table 2. Survey Respondents Informed about PrEP by testing providers					
	Informed		Not Informed		Total
N.	76	22,80%	258	72,20%	334
Testing provider					
STI Center/Infectious Diseases Dept.	34	20%	135	80%	169
Private clinic	1	2%	55	98%	56
Checkpoint	30	55%	25	45%	55
HIV association	9	29%	22	71%	31
Public clinic	1	8%	12	92%	13
Blood donation center	1	10%	9	90%	10