

AWARENESS OF HIV PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PrEP) AMONG MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN IN HANOI, VIETNAM

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Abstract. Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) with medication is used to reduce the risk of contracting HIV infection. We investigated the awareness of PrEP among men who have sex with men (MSM) in Hanoi, Vietnam, in order to inform HIV-treatment programs promoting PrEP's use. Eligibility criteria for the study included: self-identified MSM; 18 years of age or older; sexual intercourse with one or more men in the previous 3 months; voluntary study participation. From February-May 2016, 190 study participants were recruited to complete an anonymous cross-sectional survey about their awareness of PrEP and willingness to use it. The mean age of study participants was 23 years, and 28% of study participants had ever heard of PrEP. On a multivariate regression analysis, disclosing MSM status to parents, using websites to find male sexual partners and ever being tested for HIV infection were all significantly associated with awareness of PrEP. Sixty percent of participants stated they would be willing to use oral PrEP and 55% stated they would be willing to use injectable PrEP. Our findings show awareness of PrEP in the study population was low, but PrEP promotion programs through mobile applications, websites, or HIV testing sites could raise awareness among at-risk MSM. Further research is needed to better understand the factors associated with increased PrEP awareness and acceptance. It should be noted at the time this paper was written, injectable PrEP is an experimental treatment.

Keywords: pre-exposure prophylaxis, men who have sex with men, HIV, Vietnam

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