

PrEParing Women to Prevent HIV Acquisition: An Integrated Theoretical Framework for PrEP Provision

Sophie Strachan

Co chair – Sophia Forum

Co chair – Women's Working Group –
IMPACT trial

LONDON

FAST-TRACK CITIES 2019

SEPTEMBER 8-11, 2019 | BARBICAN CENTRE

SPONSORED BY:



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



Early conversations 2016

Cisgender and Trans women

- Initial HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) conversations revealed assumptions that women do not take risks
- HIV risk perception - women not always aware of their own risk
- Intimate partner violence increases acquisition of HIV, yet the focus in early conversations was limited to solely that, which portrayed women as disempowered victims
- No information tailored to meet the needs of cis and trans women

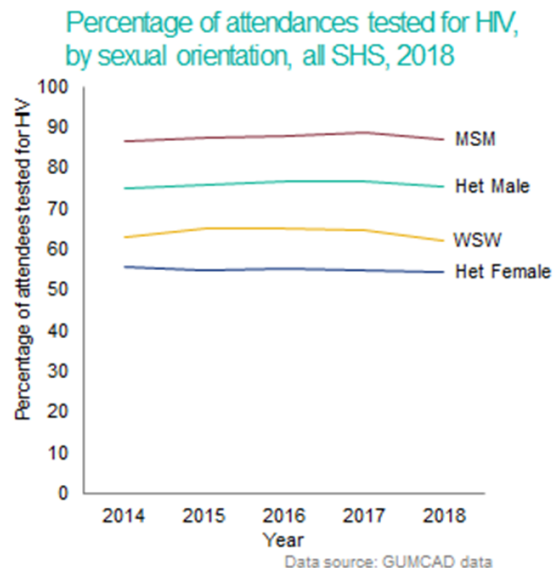
Healthcare workers' perception of women's HIV risk

How many attendees with STI related needs are offered and tested for HIV in sexual health services in England

Background

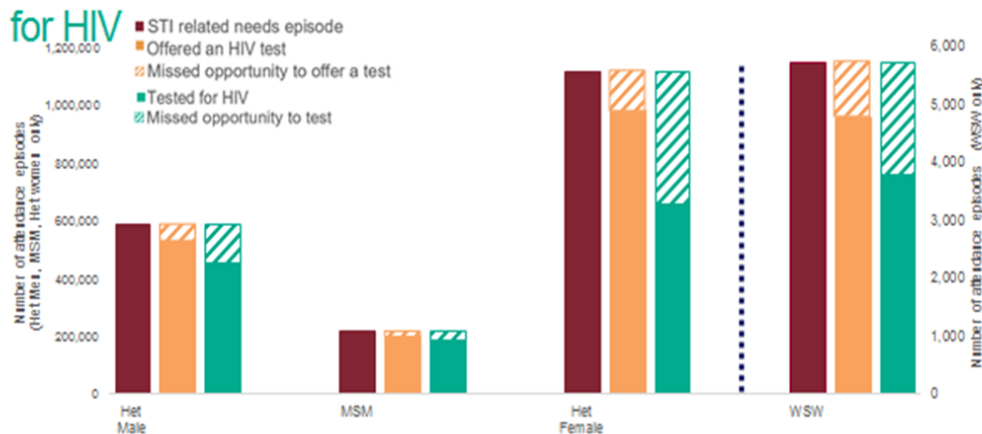
In 2018, over 1.3 million HIV tests were carried out in sexual health services in England. Despite this, there were many missed opportunities for HIV testing.

The BASHH standards recommend that 97% of attendances with STI-need should be offered an HIV test and 85% of attendances should have an HIV test recorded.



Results

CLEAN slide Results: The percentage of STI-need attendance episodes with offer of an HIV test and tested for HIV



Data source: GUMCAD service data

HIV testing and promotion of PrEP

PHE data show that in 2018, there were 213,003 missed opportunities to offer an HIV test, of which 64% were in heterosexual women

These data suggest that HCPs perceive women as being at lower risk of acquiring HIV than men

This has implications for PrEP provision for women, since if HCPs do not perceive them to be at risk, they are unlikely to discuss or offer it

“Invisible No Longer” Findings (2018)

PrEP has largely been seen as an intervention for gay men - in media, HIV advocacy and policy making

There is evidence to suggest that many women at the highest risk of acquiring HIV (e.g. Black Africans) do not attend sexual health services

PrEP access for women is relatively recent in the UK, and uptake has been limited. While awareness of PrEP among women who responded to our Prevention Survey was high, (74% of women had heard of PrEP), no women had actually used it.

There have been some community initiatives to promote PrEP information to women, but more resourced action is urgently needed

<https://sophiaforum.net/index.php/hiv-and-women-invisible-no-longer-2/>

Barriers to accessing PrEP

- Lack of knowledge of the effectiveness of PrEP as a prevention method for HIV and its availability for women
- For many African communities the word “trial” equates to being a guinea pig – ‘we’re being tested on’
- Stigma associated with PrEP
- Challenges in getting information about PrEP beyond the HIV sector
- Criminalization of sex workers is a barrier to accessing PrEP through clinic settings
- Women's understanding of their own risk
- Lack of understanding of women's risk and conversations that need to happen
- Trans individuals describe experiences of transphobic abuse and violence when travelling on public transport, a significant barrier to accessing PrEP in clinical settings

Partnership Work

- Women and PrEP IMPACT trial group
- Sophia Forum www.sophiaforum.net i-Base Women & PrEP resource www.ibase.info
- Developed website www.womenandprep.org.uk in partnership with CliniQ, ATHENA and Forum Link
- Africa Advocacy Foundation www.prepandprejudice.org.uk
- NAZ Soul Sisters Project training Violence Against Women organisations in sexual health www.naz.org.uk
- GMI partnership and PrEPster – PrEP champion report www.prepster.co.uk
- MobPrESH – PrEPster Community PrEP champion initiative
- Positive East - 'Mama Says' PrEP film www.positiveeast.org.uk



PrEP for women

One pill
Once a day
Protects against HIV

Who can use PrEP?

- Anyone who is HIV negative and who is worried about HIV.
- If you don't always use condoms.
- If worrying about HIV stops you having the sex you want.
- If your partner is HIV positive and not on treatment. (An undetectable viral load has no risk of HIV transmission).

PrEP works whatever your gender or sexuality.

womenandprep.org.uk



HIV is a sexually transmitted infection (STI).

PrEP protects women from HIV... even if we don't use condoms.

This leaflet is for all women who have sex with men, including trans women. It was written by women for women.

womenandprep.org.uk

PrEP is a pill that contains two drugs:

1. tenofovir (TD or TDF) &
2. emtricitabine (FTC)

PrEP is a daily pill.

In women, PrEP takes about a week to reach protective levels.

Missing one pill a week is okay, but taking every day is best.

i-base.info/PrEP

Who can use PrEP?

- Anyone who is HIV negative and who is worried about HIV.
- If you don't always use condoms.
- If worrying about HIV stops you having the sex you want.
- If your partner is HIV positive and not on treatment. (An undetectable viral load has no risk of HIV transmission).

PrEP works whatever your gender or sexuality.

womenandprep.org.uk

Contraception

PrEP is safe to use with most hormonal contraception (ring, patch, the pill, or an implant).

Pregnancy & breastfeeding

The drugs in PrEP are widely used by HIV positive women as treatment in pregnancy. Outside the UK, many women safely breastfeed who are using the same drugs as treatment. However, if you become pregnant please tell your doctor. If you are still at risk of HIV, guidelines recommend continuing PrEP.

i-base.info/adherence

Tips for taking PrEP

- Pick the best time to take PrEP and get into a routine.
- Keep an adherence diary - mark off each day.
- Use a pill box. This is a simple way to know if you have taken or missed your PrEP.
- Set a repeat alarm on your phone or use an App.
- Rough timing is okay - a late dose is better than none.

i-base.info/order

More info

For more copies of this leaflet and a new website for women:

- sophiaforum.net
- womenandprep.org.uk

For the full 24-page booklet on PrEP, see i-base:

- i-base.info/guides/PrEP

The full booklet has more info on all aspects of PrEP, including for women and for transgender people. Information is all online or we can post you a free printed copy.

i-base.info/order

i-base, 107 The Maltings, London, SE1 1JL, June 2018.

Trans women & PrEP?

PrEP protects trans women:

- If you have receptive vaginal or anal sex.
- If you are the insertive partner in sex (top).
- Whether or not you have had lower surgery.

There are no known negative interactions between PrEP and hormones.

- If you have any questions please speak to your doctor or clinic.

i-base.info/PrEP

Information on interactions between hormone treatments and other HIV drugs is available online from Liverpool University:

tinyurl.com/y9k6ym6t

More pages too...

PrEP is more than 99% effective – so long as you take it at least six days every week.

PrEP can help you enjoy sex without worrying about HIV.

Sex work

PrEP can be used for any job in the sex industry including porn. Many sex workers look after their sexual health but their clients might not.

- PrEP will protect against HIV if you are pressured to not use condoms.
- Specialised services (that are free from stigma and judgement) are available and recommended.

www.uglymugs.org

i-base.info/guides/preptsex-work

Tests and monitoring

People using PrEP need support with a few monitoring tests.

1. An HIV test (4th generation Ab/pAg). PrEP is only for HIV negative people.
2. STI tests, including hep B. Regularly checking for other STIs is good practice. It needs to include hep B because PrEP is active against hep B.
3. Kidney tests. Routine kidney monitoring (how often varies for different people).

These tests are free in many NHS sexual health clinics if you say you are using generic PrEP.

Conclusions

- **Risk assessment for women is much more complex** than for MSM for whom clear indicators of HIV acquisition exist (rectal STI, syphilis, presentations for PEP and condomless anal sex)
- **When discussing HIV risk with women, it is likely that framing this in the context of overall sexual and reproductive well-being will be a more effective strategy than in terms of HIV risk alone**
- **Crucial to create an atmosphere of trust** to ensure that conversations yield information that will lead to **effective outcomes**
- **Language** should be tailored **specifically to particular women/communities** to ensure that messages are correctly understood. **This can only be achieved by directly engaging with individuals and communities**
- **There is no one model or approach that will work for PrEP education, take up and commissioning of PrEP**
- **Co working amongst HCP and community orgs and activists is essential if we are to ensure ALL can learn about and access PrEP who need it**



Thank you

Dr Nneka Nwokolo

Dr Vanessa Apea

Sophie Nash

Women's PrEP working group

Sophia Forum Trustees

@SophiaForum

www.sophiaforum.net www.womenandprep.org.uk

@strachansophie