Service Optimization: Expanding PrEP delivery through Telehealth and mHealth services

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PrEP delivery in 2023

• By March 2023 more than 4 million people initiated on PrEP in over 80 countries.

• Many countries poised to deliver services that are integrated, differentiated, and sometimes digitalized for optimal PrEP use

• Service delivery modes are drivers of choice for people seeking PrEP

• Implementers could minimize barriers to services and maximize effective PrEP use by understanding these modes and preferences, including the role of telehealth and mhealth in service optimization

PrEPWatch (2023); WHO (2022)
Telemedicine: a behavioral nudge

In behavioral sciences, a nudge is “any aspect of the choice architecture that alters people’s behavior in a predictable way without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives”

- Better adherence connected to shorter follow-up
- (In)Decision for PrEP continuation
- Ongoing assessment of PrEP need
- Reminders for follow-ups
- Adherence support
- “Find PrEP near me” as the step post the nudge

Thaler & Sunstein (2009); Stewart et al. (2021); Allison et al. (2022)
Telemedicine: a behavioral nudge

PrEP USE JOURNEY

Enablers
- Perception of HIV vulnerability
- Agency: PrEP use is personal choice
- PrEP integrated in SRH services
- Comprehensive info and counselling on PrEP
- Advocacy by other ADYW PrEP users

Barriers
- Low awareness of PrEP (efficacy, use)
- Stigma and PrEP misconception in community (PrEP seen as ARVs)
- PrEP uptake prohibited by sexual partner or family

Uptake
- Low awareness of PrEP (efficacy, use)
- Stigma and PrEP misconception in community (PrEP seen as ARVs)
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Early Use
- Low awareness of PrEP (efficacy, use)
- Stigma and PrEP misconception in community (PrEP seen as ARVs)
- PrEP uptake prohibited by sexual partner or family

Persistence
- Pill-taking burden (size of pill, daily pill-taking)
- Perception of protection against HIV despite frequently missing doses

PrEP Pause
- Intentional PrEP Pause
  - Perceived lower HIV risk
  - Relationship status change
  - Relationship dynamic change (trust in long-term partner or using condoms consistently)
  - Practicing prevention-effective adherence
- Continuous assessment of HIV vulnerability
  - Experience of safety, empowerment and freedom in sexual relationships
  - Peer support and advocacy
  - Motivational counselling wrt missed PrEP doses
  - Reduced pill-taking fatigue through prevention-effective adherence
- New sexual relationship
  - Experiencing a heightened sense of HIV vulnerability linked to: (1) suspected partner infidelity or (2) witnessing family or friend testing HIV+

Unintentional PrEP Pause
- PrEP access barriers (traveling or school/work schedule conflicts with clinic visit)
- Avoiding unintentional disclosure when visiting family or rural areas

Restart
- Difficulties in forecasting sex (for prevention-effective adherence)
- Continued PrEP access barriers

Discontinuation
- Reasons for PrEP discontinuation
  - Side-effects
  - Relationship preservation taking precedence over HIV prevention
  - PrEP stigma
  - Pill-taking burden

Rousseau et al. (2021)

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Online-to-Offline models

Janamnuaysook (2019, 2020); Anand (2019)
WHO (2022) recommended simplified, demedicalized, differentiated PrEP delivery services, including the use of HIV self-testing (HIVST), that is person- and community-centered.

Youth can track “find PrEP near me” and choose the service delivery they prefer.
PrEP-user segmentation for PrEP delivery optimization

1. **The “Convenient PrEP-user”**
   - **Characteristics**
     - Platforms at easily accessible locations
     - One-stop integrated SRH services
     - Platforms that utilize minimum resources (time and money)
   - **PrEP Delivery Platform Preference**
     - Mobile Clinic
     - Courier
     - Government Facility

2. **The “Social PrEP-user”**
   - **Characteristics**
     - Prefers PrEP pick-up in shared peer spaces
     - Needs affirmation and social support for continued PrEP use
   - **PrEP Delivery Platform Preference**
     - Youth PrEP Club
     - Mobile Clinic

   - **Characteristics**
     - Seeks PrEP delivery outside of traditional medical environments
     - Requires minimal PrEP adherence support
     - Prefers HIVST to assess HIV status without having to talk to counselor/nurse about lifestyle
   - **PrEP Delivery Platform Preference**
     - Courier & scheduled Mobile Clinic visits

4. **The “Discreet PrEP-user”**
   - **Characteristics**
     - Actively avoid PrEP delivery options that include groups of people waiting for a service
     - Fear unintentional PrEP use disclosure
     - Frequently report controlling sex partners
   - **PrEP Delivery Platform Preference**
     - Courier

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Rousseau et al. (2023); AVAC Jhpiego (2020)
Thank you

- IAPAC organizer
- DTHF colleagues: LG Bekker & FastPrEP team
- The young people who visit our other services with a vision of knowing and improving their overall wellbeing