



HIV self-testing uptake among adolescent men who have sex with men (AMSM) and transgender women (ATGW) in Brazil before and during the COVID-19 pandemic: a cross-sectional study

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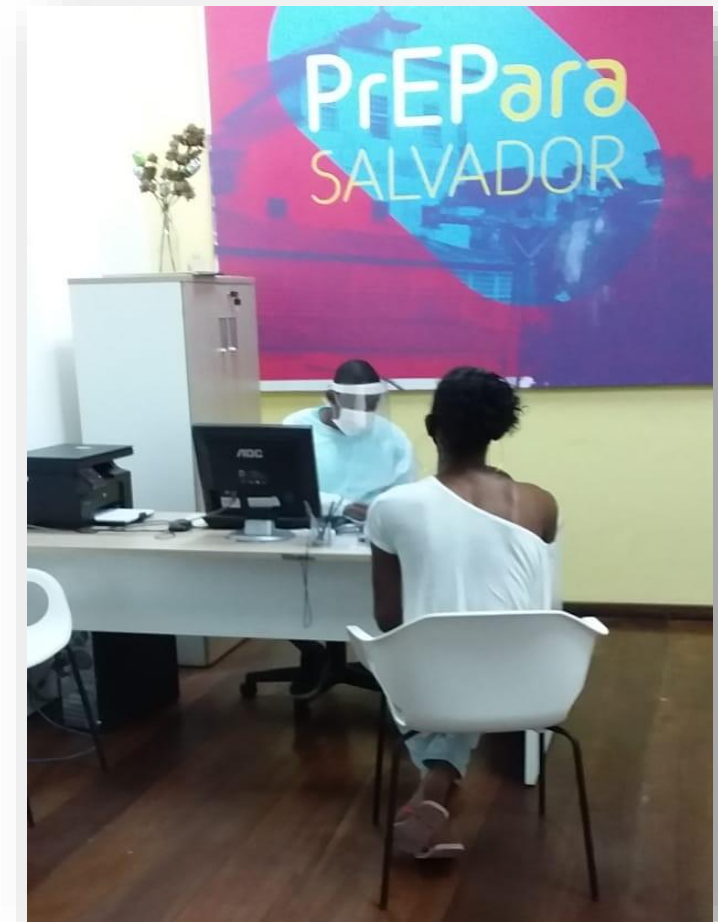
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Introduction

- HIV self-testing (HIVST) is an alternative method to reach populations that have difficulty accessing testing, such as men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender women (TGW);
- The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected HIV service delivery in several countries;
- Moreover, the importance of HIVST increased during physical distancing measures, particularly among adolescents and young people from sexual and gender minorities.
- This study aimed to identify the factors associated with HIVST uptake among adolescent men who have sex with men (AMSM) and transgender women (ATGW) in three Brazilian capitals before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Methods

- A cross-sectional HIVST uptake study was conducted, nested within the PrEP1519 study, a cohort of daily oral PrEP among MSM and TGW aged 15–19 in three large capital cities in Brazil- Salvador, São Paulo, and Belo Horizonte;
- HIVST kits composed of the test itself, guidelines, condoms, and intimate lubricant) were provided to all participants by peer educators while providing prevention interventions developed in the context of demand creation strategies for PrEP from February 21th/2019 to March 31th/2021;
- These interventions were provided face-to-face in youth venues (e.g., parties and beaches) and via hook-up apps and online networks (e.g., Grindr, Instagram, and Facebook).

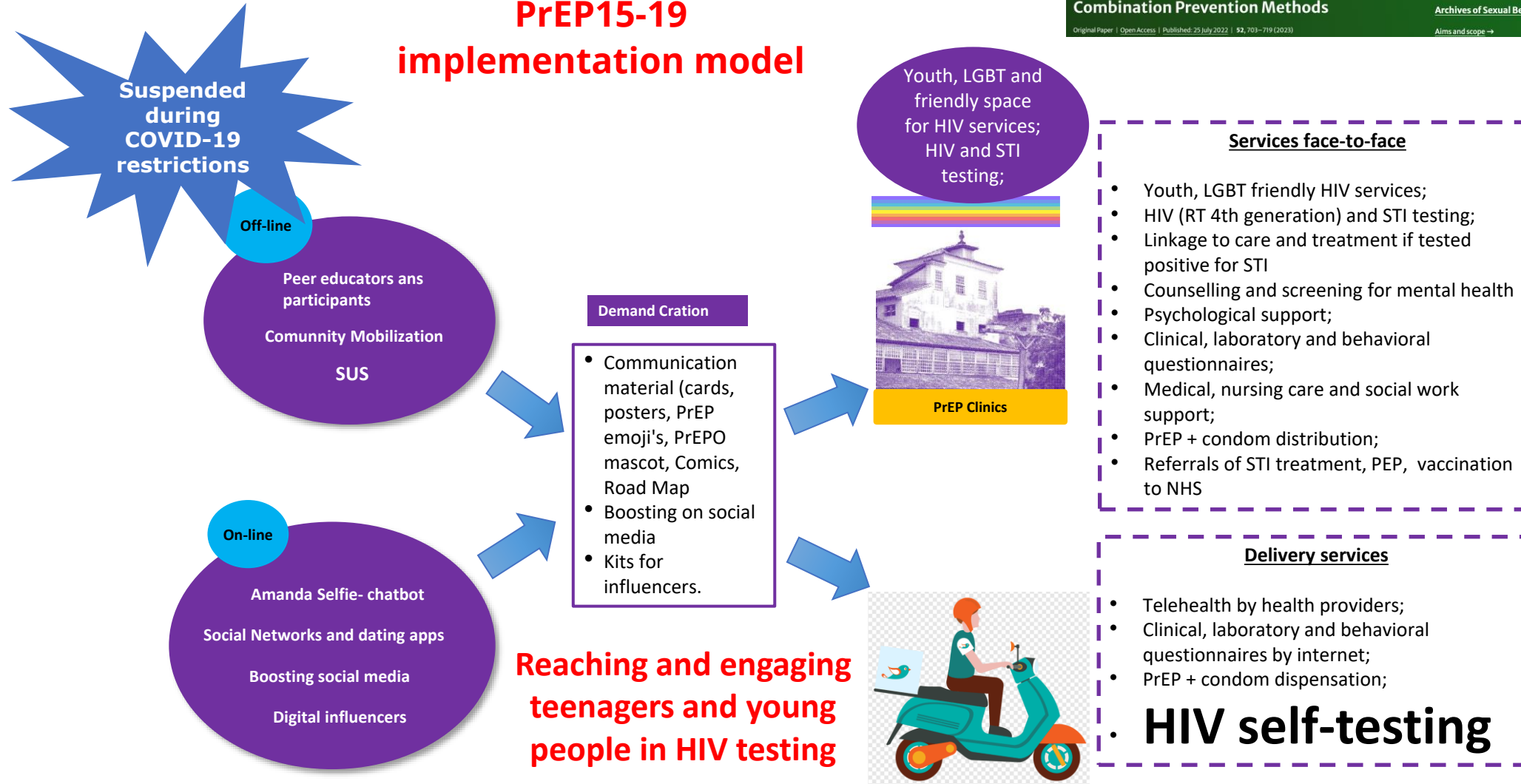


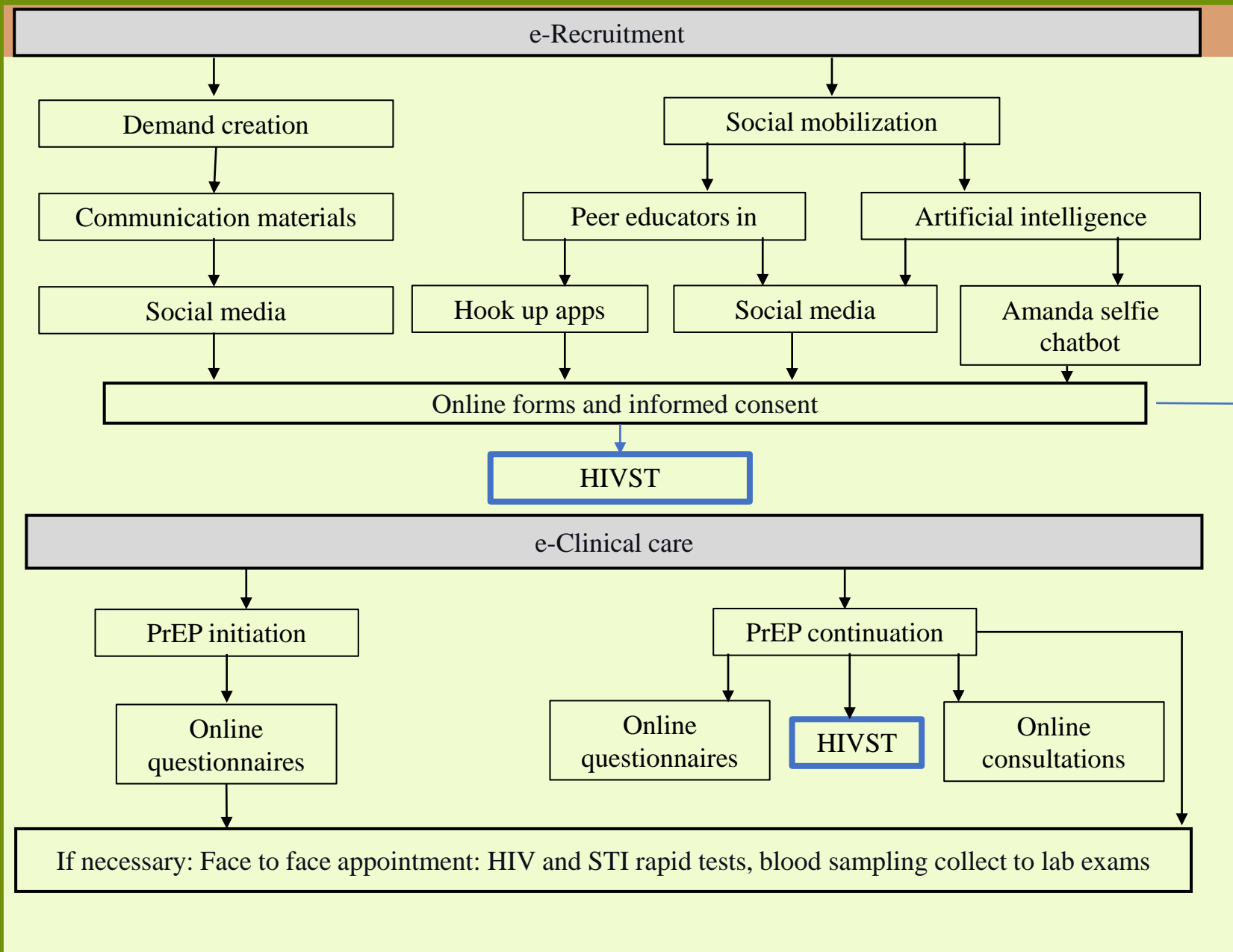
Instructive video



QR code for accessing the paper

PrEP15-19 implementation model





Online consent form to adolescents > 18 y.o

Consent form signed by parents or guardians for adolescents < 18 years old



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Adapting to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Continuing HIV Prevention Services for Adolescents Through Telemonitoring, Brazil

Inês Dourado, Laio Magno, Fabiane Soares, Paula Massa, Amy Nunn, Shona Dalal, Alexandre Grangeiro on behalf of The Brazilian PrEP1519 Study Group



The PrEP1519 telehealth strategy

Methods

- HIVST kits were provided to all participants during face-to-face interventions and sent by mail during virtual interventions.
- A socio-behavioral questionnaire was administered when the HIVST kits were distributed;
- The study period was divided into two discrete periods:
 - Before the COVID-19 pandemic (February 21th, 2019, to March 15th, 2020);
 - During the pandemic (March 16th, 2020, to March 31st, 2021).
- The outcome was HIVST uptake (yes, no), stratified by the period before and during the pandemic.
- Multivariable logistic regression estimated the odds ratios (OR) and their respective 95% confidence intervals (95% CIs) of the association between predictor variables and HIVST uptake.
- This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the World Health Organization (Protocol ID: Fiotec-PrEP Adolescent Study) and by the REC of the local Universities.

Results

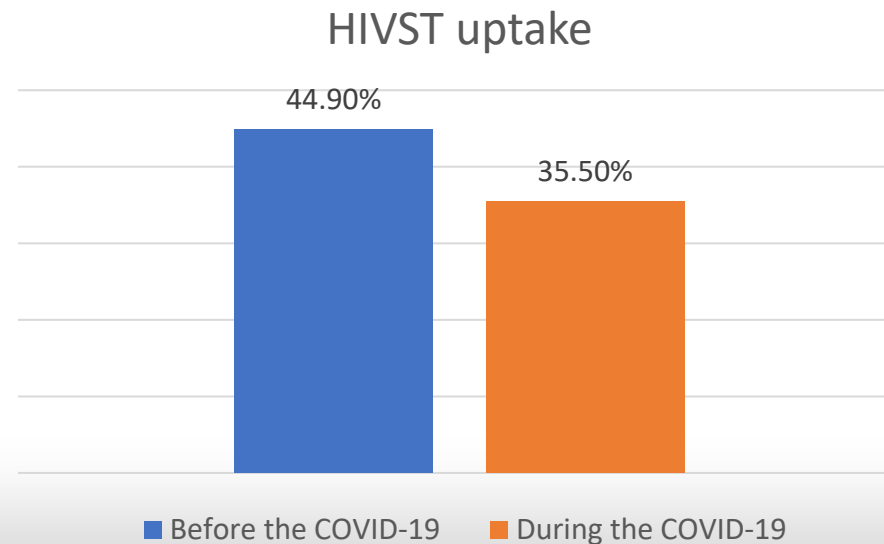
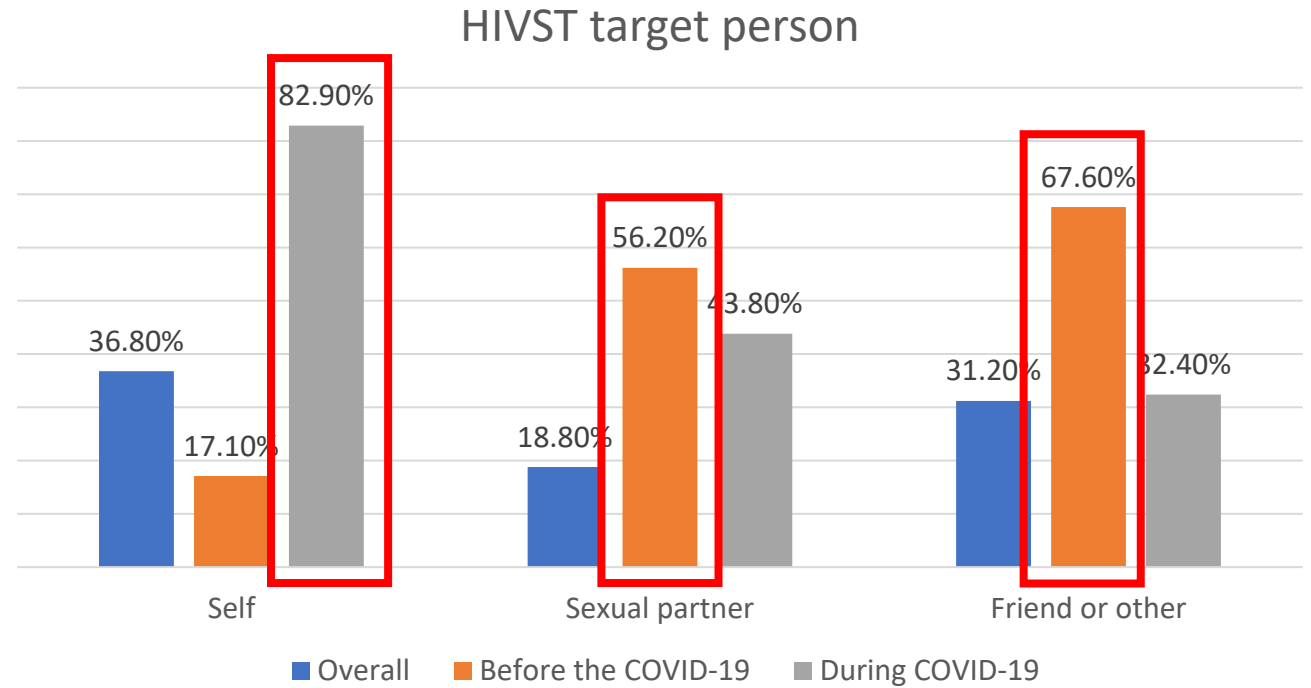
Table 1. Characteristics of study participants, PrEP1519 study, 2019–2021, Brazil

Variables	Pre-pandemic* [N = 510] n (%)	During the pandemic* [N = 1075] n (%)	Variables	Pre-pandemic* [N = 510] n (%)	During the pandemic* [N = 1075] n (%)
Sociodemographic			Education		
Population			Current living situation		
AMSM	448 (88.19)	947 (88.34)	Elementary education and adult education	48 (10.32)	86 (8.93)
ATGW	60 (11.81)	125 (11.66)	High school	281 (60.43)	637 (66.15)
Age			Higher education	136 (29.25)	240 (24.92)
15–17 years	90 (19.40)	178 (18.46)	Condom use in receptive anal sex with a casual partner in the previous 3 months		
18–19 years	374 (80.60)	786 (81.54)	Parents or other family members	373 (80.22)	776 (80.50)
Race/skin color			Other people	62 (13.33)	129 (13.38)
White	147 (28.82)	303 (28.19)	Alone	30 (6.45)	59 (6.12)
Black or Pardo	348 (68.24)	736 (68.47)	Consistent use	119 (39.53)	164 (31.78)
Yellow, indigenous, or other	15 (2.94)	36 (3.35)	Inconsistent use	182 (60.47)	352 (68.22)

Results

Table 2. HIVST kit requests and provision before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, PrEP1519 study, 2019–2021, Brazil.

	Overall (N=1,585) n (%)	Pre- pandemic* (N=510) n (%)	During the pandemic** (N=1,075) n (%)
Total number of participants who received a HIVST kit at least once	491	229	382
Total HIVST kits provided	1290	570 (44.2)	720 (55.8)



Results

Table 3.
Factors associated with requesting HIVST before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, PrEP1519 study, 2019–2021, Brazil.

Variables	Pre-pandemic* (N=510)	During the pandemic** (N=1075)
	Adjusted OR (95% CI)	Adjusted OR (95% CI)
Gender		
Cis man	1.00 (ref.)	1.00 (ref.)
TGW	0.86 (0.463–1.586)	0.66 (0.338–1.231)
Age		
15–17 years	1.00 (ref.)	1.00 (ref.)
18–19 years	0.99 (0.618–1.603)	1.81 (1.100–3.045)
Current living situation		
Parents or other family members	1.00 (ref.)	1.00 (ref.)
Other people	1.00 (0.565–1.767)	0.92 (0.544–1.542)
Alone	3.36 (1.496–8.292)	2.35 (1.013–5.780)
Steady sexual partner in the previous 3 months		
No		1.00 (ref.)
Yes		0.57 (0.394–0.823)
Receptive anal sex with a steady or casual partner in the previous 3 months		
No partners or no passive anal sex	1.00 (ref.)	
Passive anal sex	1.53 (1.021–2.294)	
Frequent oral sex with steady partners in previous 3 months		
No		1.00 (ref.)
Yes		2.84 (1.081–8.857)

Table Legend:
* February 21, 2019, to March 15, 2020;
** March 16, 2020, to March 31, 2021.





Conclusions and lessons learned

- ❖ High HIVST uptake before the pandemic, and the main target group for the kits was the participants' friends and sexual partners.
- ❖ However, uptake decreased during the pandemic, with a shift toward greater use of self-testing by the participants themselves;
- ❖ During a health crisis, the expansion of HIVST in PrEP services can help expand the HIV testing in key populations by facilitating clinical follow-up
- ❖ Investments already made in demand creation, and online social media platforms for adolescents by the PrEP1519 project, allowed the rapid shift to more complete telehealth services and HIVST delivery due to COVID-19 pandemic;
- ❖ However, adolescents TGW had a lower uptake, highlighting the need to make efforts to reach this population;
- ❖ These experiences offer important lessons for other middle-income countries scaling up HIVST among adolescents.

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Obrigado!

Thank you!



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