

Research Snapshot



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Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS
at Yale University

Framing HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for the General Public: How Inclusive Messaging May Prevent Prejudice from Diminishing Public Support

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What is the research about?

Pre-exposure prophylaxis or “PrEP” is medication that helps protect HIV-negative people from getting HIV. We examined how public opinion about PrEP differed depending on whether PrEP was described as a medication that could benefit gay men, Black gay men, or people in general. We also explored how prejudice might play into these attitudes.

Why is this important for HIV prevention and treatment?

PrEP is over 90% effective in reducing the risk of getting HIV from sex. It is essential that people at risk, particularly groups disproportionately affected by HIV, such as Black gay men, have access to PrEP. Public opinion about PrEP could influence future policies and programs that make PrEP accessible.

What did the researchers do?

We conducted an online survey of 154 members of the general public. After providing participants with basic background info about PrEP, we asked them to report their attitudes toward it. For each participant, PrEP was described as being for one of three groups: gay men, Black gay men, or people in general. We also asked questions to assess participants’ level of prejudice.

What did the researchers find?

Participants believed that gay men and Black gay men would be better at sticking to their daily PrEP regimen as compared to people in general and that PrEP would be especially beneficial to Black gay men. However, participants reported lower support for policies and programs making PrEP affordable for these two minority groups versus

people in general, and this difference was stronger among participants expressing greater prejudice.

How can you use this research?

This study calls attention to how associating PrEP with racial and sexual minorities could undermine access to PrEP due to prejudice toward these groups. Talking about and marketing PrEP as a tool for everyone at risk rather than focusing on particular minority groups could help to improve access for all people who could benefit from PrEP, including Black gay men.

Original Research Article:

Calabrese, S.K., Underhill, K., Earnshaw, V.A., Hansen, N.B., Kershaw, T.S., Magnus, M., Krakower, D.S., Mayer, K.H., Betancourt, J.R., & Dovidio, J.F. (2016). Framing HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for the general public: How inclusive messaging may prevent prejudice from diminishing public support. *AIDS and Behavior*, 20(7), 1499-1513. [PubMed](#)