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Assessing the Acceptability of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Among HIV High-Risk Patients and Healthcare Providers In the Dominican Republic

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Abstract:

Background and Objectives:

- LGBT and Men who have sex with men have reported high discrimination in the healthcare setting. This discrimination places them at high risk for HIV.
- Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), an approach used in high HIV risk populations, is currently not available in the Dominican Republic.
- This study aimed to evaluate how HIV high-risk patients perceive PrEP and the likelihood of healthcare providers to prescribe PrEP.

Methods:

- Using convenience sampling and the snowball effect, we recruited and interviewed 65 participants and 25 healthcare providers. Participants were 18 years old or older, HIV negative, and self-identified as gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, or MSM.
- PrEP perception, level of embarrassment, and likelihood of PrEP recommendation was measured using a Likert scale survey ranging from, 1 being "Most likely/embarrassed" to 5 being "Least likely/embarrassed".

Results:

- A chi-square test compared PrEP interest between different sexual orientations, $X^2(6, N=65) = 3.03, p=0.80$, no statistical difference was found between the groups and their PrEP interest.
- More than 20% of gay, MSM, transgender and transsexual participants reported to not feel embarrassed to take PrEP. While less than 5% of all the participants reported to feel really embarrassed to take PrEP.
- 40% of the providers reported that they might prescribe PrEP if the patient demonstrates HIV risk while 4% reported they would not prescribe PrEP at all.

Conclusion:

- No negative stigma was tied to the use of PrEP, meaning potential users would welcome the implementation of PrEP.
- Despite the small sample size of healthcare providers (n=25), more than half would consider to prescribe PrEP if a patient demonstrates high HIV risk.

Future Directions:

- Gain in-depth perception of the healthcare providers' perception of PrEP
- Interview other minority populations, such as Haitian immigrants or HIV+ individuals
- Educate the high-risk community of current preventive services in the National Prevention Services.

Topic Selection:

Student Research (ASPPH Fellows as well as current masters and graduate students)

Title:

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