

PrEP and U=U as catalysts for testing, treatment and better sexual health: challenges and opportunities

Poland – combined medical and social approach

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STARTING POINT (2014)

- very few REAL sex clinics and very few REAL STI specialists,
- stigma attached to HIV and STIs, open sexual attitudes not accepted,
- homophobia (aggr. and passive-aggr.) among medical professionals and society,
- national PrEP guidelines available since 2014 but no national programme or reimbursement, PrEP cost 3500zł = 800 Euros (15 PrEP users).

MEANWHILE

- 20.000 PLWH in Poland, 1400 new HIV cases annually and 70% among MSM (30% of MSM unaware of their infection), no reliable incidence data,
- other STIs – A LOT but no one knows how many.

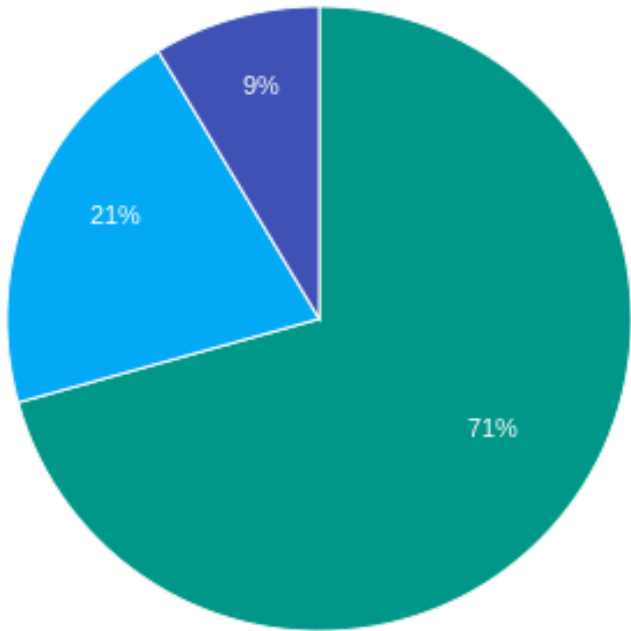
TURNING POINT (2017)

- Generic drug company coming forward with FTC/TDF costing 30 Euros/30 tablets.

BARRIERS

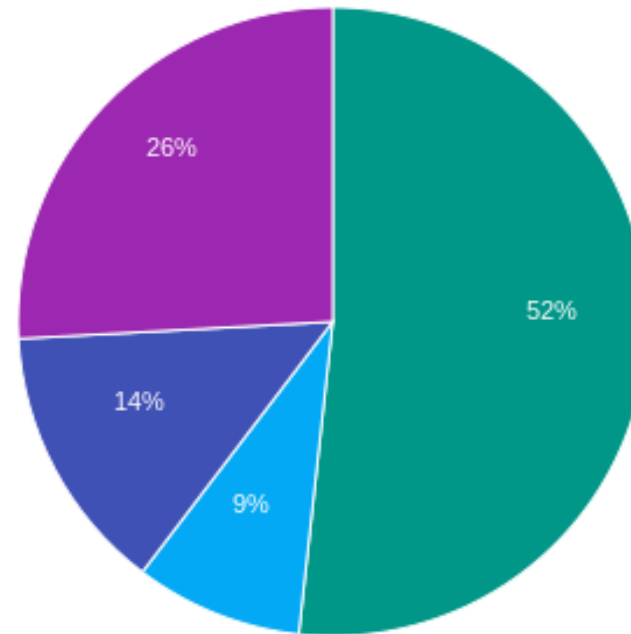
- Where should PrEP be provided and by whom since reimbursement not available?
- What patients want and which doctors most suitable for the task?
- Online/conference questionnaires for medical professionals (mostly infectious diseases specialists; n=146) and patients (n=349).

**If there were PrEP clinics,
would you be interested to
work there as a doctor?**



YES.
NO, I do not have time.
NO, I am not interested.

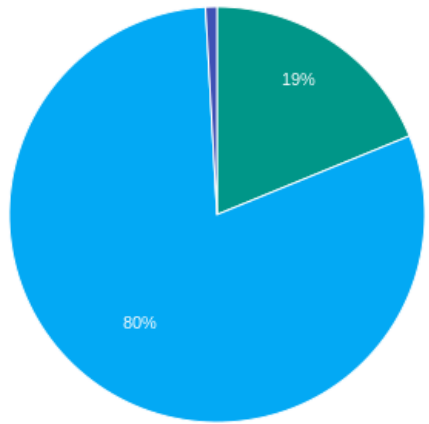
**Would it be possible to offer
PrEP at your current clinic?**



YES.
NO, I do not have time.
NO, I am not interested.
**NO, because I do not work
at an out-patient clinic**

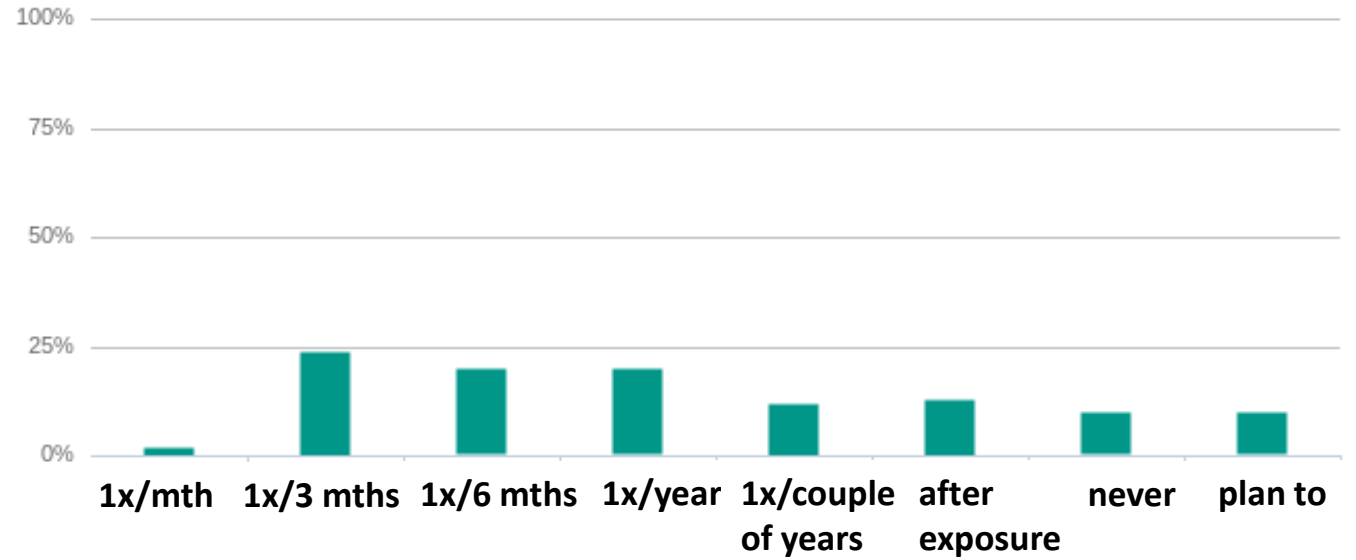
Patients' responses.

Have you been diagnosed with any STI in the last year?

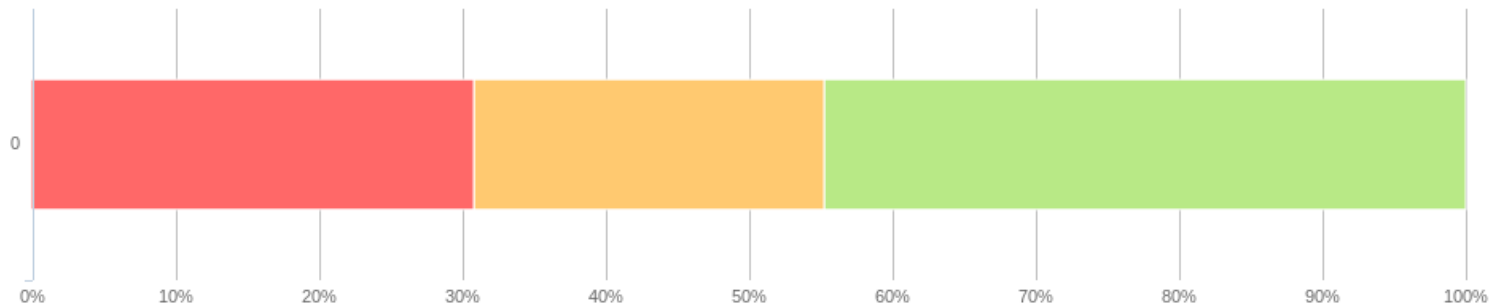


YES
NO, never

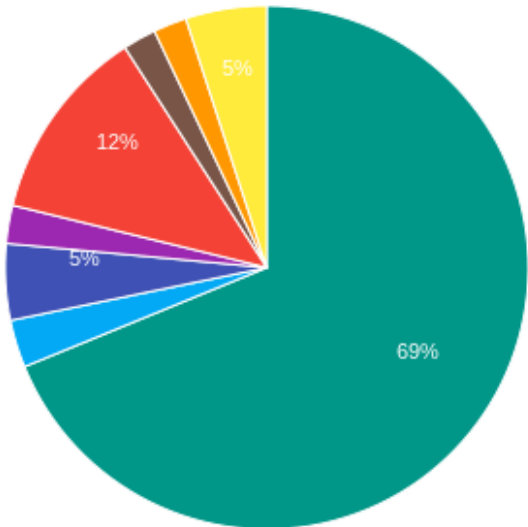
How often do you get tested for HIV?



How often do you use condoms with casual partners?

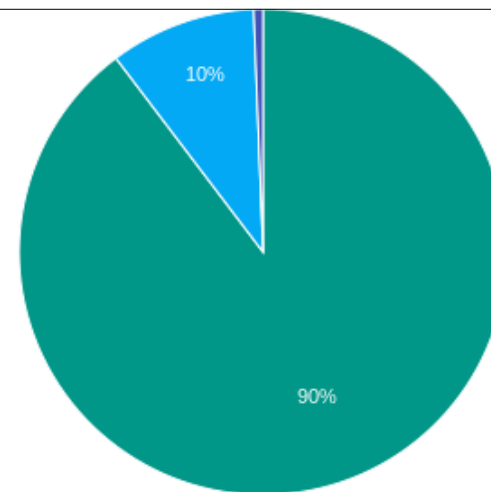


Would you want to use PrEP?



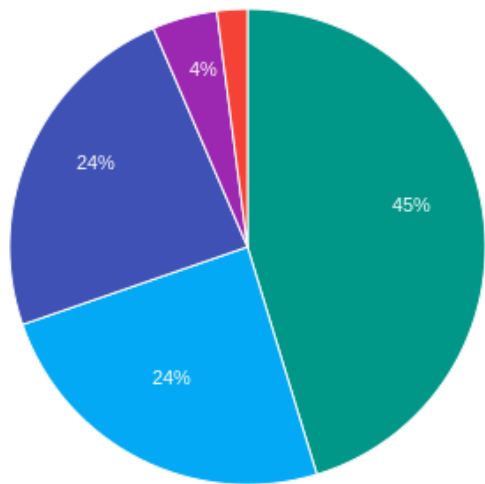
YES
NO, I use condoms
NO, my partner tested negative
NO, I am HIV+
I do not know
NO
I use PrEP already

Do you think PrEP should be free of charge?



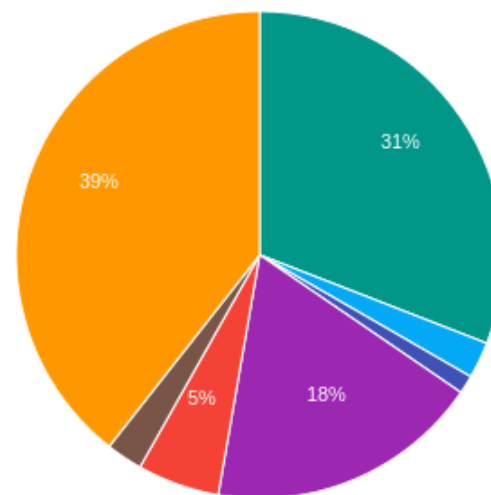
YES
NO

Where would you want to access PrEP?



Any doctor
Testing sites
PrEP clinics
STI clinic
Somewhere else

If you are using PrEP already, where are you getting it from?



Polish PrEP clinic
PrEP clinic abroad
Clinical trial
Online
PEP medication
I do not use PrEP

STATE of PrEP in Poland, 2019

- 2000 PrEP users = 5% of target; 99% MSM.
- 1500 get PrEP from PrEP clinics.
 - 500 get PrEP online.
- PrEP prescription monitoring possible thanks to Wojciech Niemczyk - Ministry of Health.
- PrEP clinics - the only REAL STI out-patient clinic, **not only for PrEP users** = opportunity.
 - No reimbursement.



FACILITATORS

- Local doctors, scientists ([gay friendly, MSM](#)), opinion leaders decided to create PrEP clinics.
- MDs being [part of gay/MSM scene](#) or [taking care of HIV/STI patients](#) – more credible and trustworthy as PrEP providers as well as more at ease and more willing to offer PrEP.
- PrEP and HIV patients getting involved in peer whisper campaigns.
- Central [prep.edu.pl](#) web page connecting every provider and outlining guidelines.
- Easy and non-judgemental STIs checkups/treatment, although not reimbursed, encouraged patients at risk to come.

And very important social involvement to inform about PrEP, clear misconceptions and create demand outside PrEP clinics.

STARTING POINT

- social taboo around sex (even in LGBTI population)
- hostile political and social environment towards LGBTI people
- HIV stigma
- community misunderstandings around PrEP
- no public health sector support for PrEP users
- limited resources

COMMUNITY INTERVENTION ASSUMPTIONS

1

Engages community

2

Culturally competent

3

Focuses on most-at-risk subpopulations

4

Uses positive messages

COMMUNITY INTERVENTION PILLOWS



Awareness raising



Potential users identification



Easy access to treatment

1

AWARENESS RAISING

- community leaders engagement (vloggers, Mr Gay & Bear Poland, s. Mary Read)



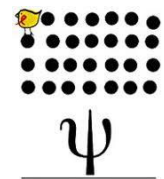
- Community PrEP workshops, movie shows (PrEP 17 by N. Feustel)



- LGBTI media engagement



- outreach & community work





POTENTIAL USERS IDENTIFICATION

- outreach prevention & CBVCT engagement

Screening questions regarding:

- condomless intercourse
- STD in last 12 months
- PEPSE use in last 12 months
- IDU
- ChemSex

If one of the conditions is met - suggested intervention regarding PrEP use



EASY ACCESS TO TREATMENT

- Polish AIDS Society recommendations and statement regarding PrEP use
- independent non-public clinics providing medical services for PrEP users based on LGBTI friendly or LGBTI staff:
 - for-profit
 - non-profit: created by community
- cooperation with pharmacies providing continuous access to drugs

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Jesteś Presterem?

*Czasami po narkotykach
nie kontroluję tego, co robię.*

*Mam sporo różnych
koleś i nie zawsze
dbam o bezpieczeństwo.*

*Używam gumek, ale czasami
zdarza mi się zapomnieć.*

*Czasami po alkoholu
urywa mi się film.*

*Ostatnio miałem
rzeżączkę.*

Ostatnio miałem kiłę.

*Czasami guma
mi pęka.*

***Zdecyduj, czy nie potrzebujesz dodatkowego
zabezpieczenia przed HIV.***

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