

# Attitudes towards PrEP among the general public: Effects of framing different target populations for PrEP use

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## Background

PrEP is especially useful for people who are at high risk of getting infected with HIV, such as men who have sex with men (MSM) and people who inject drugs (PWID). However, among the general public group specific prejudice might lead to differing attitudes towards PrEP access and use by these target groups, which in turn can affect PrEP access policies and programs. Country-specific data is necessary, since cultural variance is possible on this topic. Since no such data is available for the Dutch context, we seek to investigate group specific attitudes towards PrEP among the general public living in the Netherlands, after they received information about how PrEP can be useful for three different groups: People in general, MSM or PWID.

## Methods

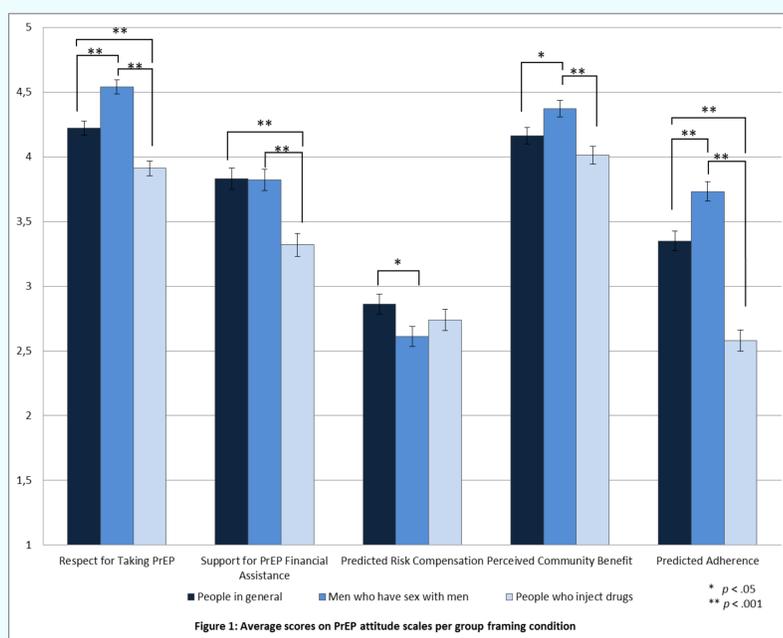
During May-June 2017, 259 participants (convenience sampling) from the general public working and/or residing in the Netherlands completed a questionnaire with 28 items about their attitudes towards PrEP. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the three framing conditions: People in general, MSM and PWID. Outcomes were assessed on five dimensions: Respect for taking PrEP, support for PrEP financial assistance, predicted risk compensation behavior, perceived community benefit, and predicted adherence. Mediation effects were calculated using Hayes' PROCESS macro model number 4 and 10.000 bootstrap samples.



## Objective

We aim to investigate the attitudes of the general public in the Netherlands towards PrEP when PrEP is described as beneficial for different high risk groups. Secondly, we aim to conceptually replicate previous research that investigated this question in the U.S. American context, to investigate potential overlap and differences.

## Results

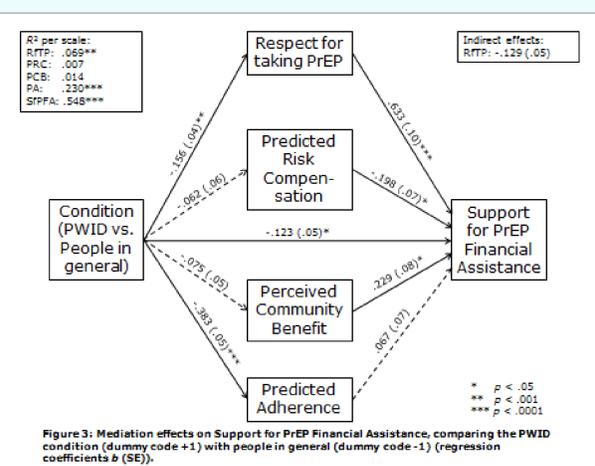
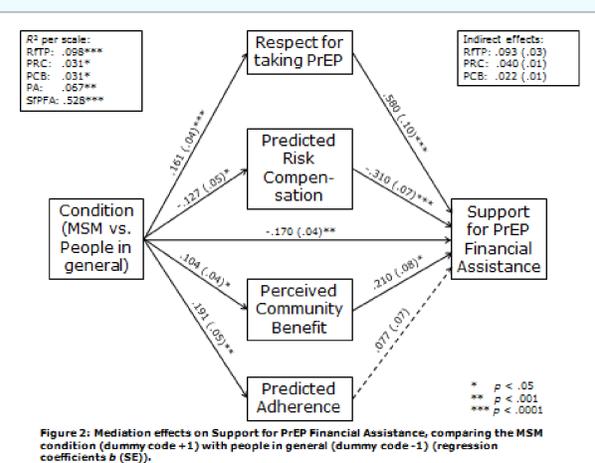


## Main findings

- The general public has the most respect for taking PrEP when PrEP is presented as beneficial for MSM.
- There is no difference in support for PrEP financial assistance between people in general and MSM.
- The general public thinks that the perceived community benefit and predicted adherence is the highest among MSM.
- Support for PrEP for PWID is low on almost all scales.
- The support for PrEP financial assistance for MSM is mediated by three of the subscales (respect for taking PrEP, predicted risk compensation, and perceived community benefit).
- The support for PrEP financial assistance for PWID is mediated by respect for taking PrEP.

## Conclusion

In contrast to an earlier study conducted in the USA (Calabrese et al., 2016) we did not find lower support for PrEP for MSM compared to people in general. Our results revealed that prejudice towards MSM play less of a role in the Netherlands, which is good news. Support for PrEP for PWID was lower, which might be caused by negative attitudes towards PWID in general. Our results are hopeful for MSM PrEP access support in the general public. For optimal support for PrEP in the general public and for policy making, PrEP access messaging should be focused on specific target groups and thus should differentiate between MSM and PWID.



## References

- Calabrese, S. K., Underhill, K., Earnshaw, V. A., Hansen, N. B., Kershaw, T. S., Magnus, M., ... 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. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-016-1318-9>