

HIV, ART and chemoprophylaxis among MSM: Results from the Dutch sample of the EMIS 2017/2018 survey

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Background

The EMIS survey is a large scale EU wide survey among MSM and provides insights into the livelihoods of MSM covering a large range of topics: sexual health, HIV prevention and treatment, substance use, and mental health. We focused on HIV related topics in the Dutch subsample.

Methods

A cross-sectional study (N=3,851) was conducted in late 2017/early 2018 to investigate:

HIV testing (HIV prevalence, knowledge gaps related to HIV, knowledge about HIV tests, treatment and prevention), HIV treatment (HIV diagnosis, HIV treatment support), HIV chemoprophylaxis (prevalence of PEP/PrEP use, awareness and knowledge of PEP/PrEP, access to PEP/PrEP, gaps between knowledge and access of PEP/PrEP, PEP/PrEP promotion). Descriptive analysis are reported here to give a first overview over the data.

Results:

Demographics

In the sample, 85% of respondents used Dutch to complete the survey. The mode age group was 50-59 (26%), 12% of respondents were young people aged 14-29 years and 12% were 60 years or older. Overall, The median number of years in education since the age of 16 was six years, almost all men (96.9%) had some education after the age of 16. Seventy-five percent of men were in employment and more than a half of men (67%) felt that they were living comfortably or really comfortably.

HIV testing

In the sample, 15.7% (n=603) of the MSM had received an HIV diagnosis. Overall, basic knowledge about HIV transmission was generally high in the whole sample. U=U (undetectable = untransmittable) is known to 2 out of 3 participants.

HIV treatment

A sizeable minority (15.6%) had never tested for HIV; the main reasons where not knowing/being sure where to get an HIV test (29%). Among those who had ever tested for HIV, 18.6% had received a positive HIV diagnosis. The most common place for an HIV diagnosis was at a hospital/clinic outpatient setting. Ninety-five percent of those diagnosed got some form of support after their diagnosis. 77% were satisfied with the support received.

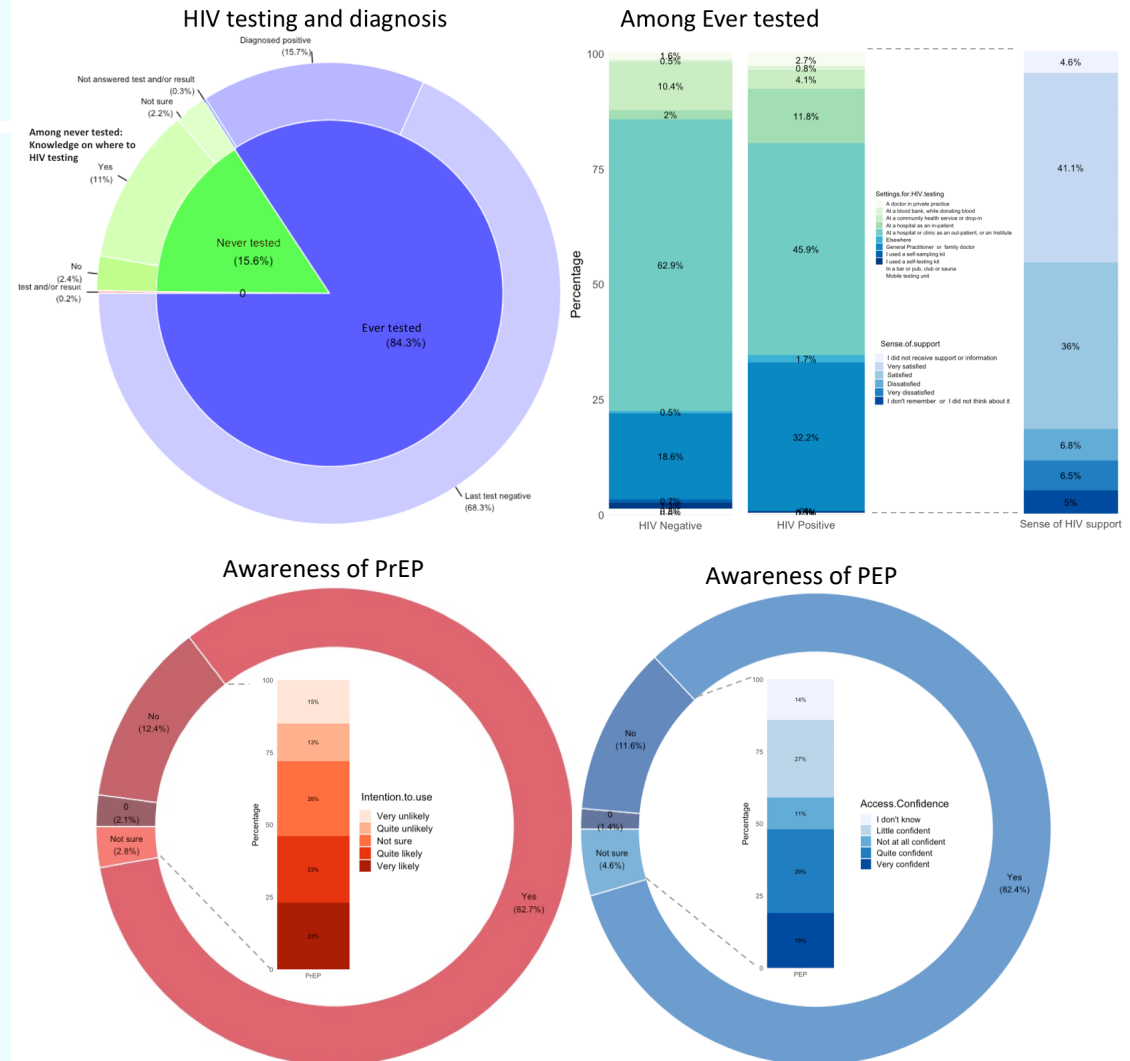
HIV chemoprophylaxis

PrEP: Knowledge about PrEP is widespread, 12% were unaware of PrEP, but only 13% indicated that a healthcare provider informed them about PrEP. Less than half (40%) were willing to use PrEP if it is available and affordable. 11% had tried to get PrEP, and overall 25.3% were taking it on a daily basis.

PEP: PEP is known as a form of prevention. Only 12% were unaware of PEP, and 20% were not confident that they could access PEP if they required it. Overall, only 9.4% had tried to get PEP. Among those who tried, 36.4% could not get it, and 9.9% had taken more than one course of PEP.

Conclusion

Our data complements other national data and provides a valuable basis to further tailor HIV prevention measures and to improve HIV treatment. The results show three main areas to focus interventions on: HIV testing, increasing knowledge about U=U, and increasing access to and use of PrEP and PEP.



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