

LET'S TALK ABOUT PrEP

UNDERSTANDING PERCEPTIONS OF PrEP AMONG MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

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INTRODUCTION

Evidence is strengthening to support Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) as an important addition to HIV prevention. Although in Australia the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has not approved the use of Truvada as PrEP yet, there are a number of trials such as PRELUDE, which will further establish an evidence base for PrEP in Australia.

ACON and other organisations in New South Wales and Australia are aware that some MSM are accessing PrEP from overseas, in addition to those accessing it through the research trials. Given this and the growing evidence on the effectiveness of PrEP, ACON saw it as important to increase awareness and knowledge of PrEP among MSM in NSW, particularly through social media.

METHODS

Social media has played a significant role in raising awareness and engaging MSM about topics relating to HIV, including PrEP.

Using ACON's Ending HIV communications platform, ACON has been able successfully build a strong and active presence on social media channels – particularly Facebook, and sustain strong engagement with MSM in NSW around HIV since the launch of this campaign.

Over the past 2.5 years since its launch, Ending HIV social media platforms have developed and executed a strong content strategy, which include a variety of topics related to HIV, sexual health and LGBTI issues more broadly.

Regarding content specific to PrEP, a total of 35 content items - including research, news articles, personal stories and opinion pieces - were distributed via Facebook over 6 months.

TWO KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS WERE ANALYSED TO MEASURE LEVELS OF INTEREST.

- Number of people reached per content item
- Number of people engaged per content item

Additionally, the most common questions, concerns and perceptions around PrEP were identified and tracked as part of the monitoring and evaluation of social media content.

RESULTS

The web page hosted on the Ending HIV website dedicated to PrEP information rapidly became the third most visited and engaged page with only 2 weeks after it was launched. The majority of comments recorded were supportive of PrEP as an HIV prevention option. It is also clear from social media interactions that while gay men are interested in embracing PrEP, the community still regards condoms as having a strong role to play in HIV prevention.

Most common questions and concerns about PrEP were with

- side effects
- costs
- government support
- prevention efficacy
- its impact on other STIs

During this period

✓ **62849**
 Facebook users reached via social media

5400 total users engaged
224 average users engaged per item



In comparison to the average performance of all content items distributed via Facebook, PrEP related content generated increases of

35% in reach
15% in engagement

CONCLUSIONS

PrEP has rapidly become a 'hot' topic among MSM in Australia; this is clearly reflected across digital and social media environments, such as Facebook and Twitter, where MSM engaged in conversations about PrEP among themselves but also directly with ACON via the Ending HIV campaign social media and other web platforms.

However there are clear misconceptions, contrasting opinions and knowledge gaps regarding PrEP among MSM across ages and other demographic groups.

It is important that these insights are taken into consideration and addressed in further HIV prevention campaigns and communication developments, including and especially for web and social media channels, where MSM interact and have conversations in this area.