High Prevalence of PrEP Indication in People Who Inject Drugs in Boston, MA, 2018

1024

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INTRODUCTION

- People who inject drugs (PWID) experience injection-related and sexual risks for HIV acquisition
- U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommendations note that offering PrEP to PWID is of a substantial net benefit with high certainty[1]
- PrEP knowledge and uptake are lower in PWID compared to other populations (e.g., MSM)[2]

OBJECTIVE

- To assess the prevalence of PrEP indication (by injection-related and sexual risk behaviors) among PWID in the Greater Boston Area, where HIV transmission among PWID is increasing

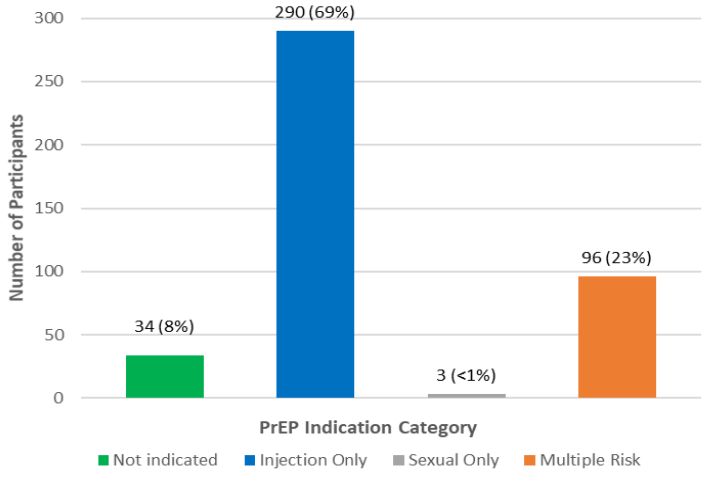
METHODS

- **Data Source:** 2018 National HIV Behavioral Surveillance System (NHBS) survey with PWID in Greater Boston Area[3]
  - Recruited via respondent driven sampling
  - Eligibility: ≥18 years old; reporting injecting drugs (past 12mo); residing in the Boston MSA; speaking English or Spanish; not previously participating in NHBS; HIV-negative status (self-report)
- **Outcome:** PrEP indication according to types of self-reported behaviors that increase HIV acquisition risk:
  1. Not indicated for PrEP
  2. Indicated based on injection behaviors only (sharing syringes or other injection equipment, past year)
  3. Indicated based on sexual behaviors only (inconsistent condom use during anal or vaginal sex with partner[s] of HIV-positive or unknown status, past year; or having an STI, past 6mo)
  4. Indicated based on both injection and sexual behaviors
- **Data Analysis:** Descriptive statistics summarized prevalence of PrEP indication, awareness, and use

Most PWID in the 2018 Boston NHBS (**92%**) had PrEP indication based on USPSTF guidelines

However, PrEP knowledge was suboptimal, and few PWID had discussed PrEP with healthcare providers (11%) or used it (2%)

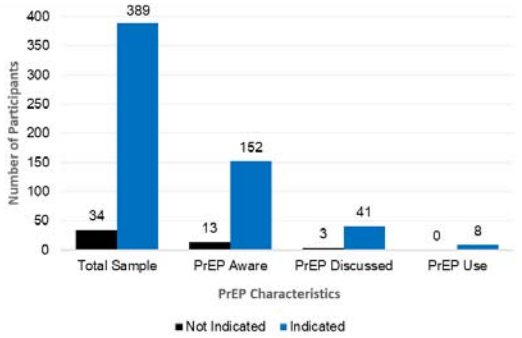
Figure 1. PrEP indication in 2018 Boston PWID NHBS by HIV risk behaviors (n=423)



RESULTS

- Among 423 HIV-uninfected PWID, 389 (92%) had PrEP indication based on USPSTF guidelines
  - 290 (69%) were indicated for injection risks only
  - 3 (<1%) were indicated for sexual risks only
  - 96 (23%) were indicated for both injection and sexual risks (Figure 1)
    - 70 (17%) of heterosexual PWID reported inconsistent condom use with partners of unknown HIV status
- Among those with PrEP indication, 152 (**39%**) reported that they had heard of PrEP before,
  - 41 (**11%**) had discussed PrEP with a healthcare provider; 8 (**2%**) had used it (past year; Figure 2)

Figure 2. PrEP Characteristics by PrEP Indication, (n=423)



DISCUSSION

- Behaviors that increase HIV acquisition risk and thus indicate PrEP need were highly prevalent among PWID in the 2018 Boston NHBS
- Most PWID were indicated for PrEP due to injection behaviors, but nearly a quarter also had sexual risk
- Clinical and community-based interventions to improve PrEP uptake among PWID are needed

Selected References: 1) Owens et al. *JAMA*, 2019; 2) Bazzi et al. *AIDS Patient Care STDS*, 2018; 3) CDC. NHBS Round 5: Model Surveillance Protocol; 2018. **Acknowledgements:** 1) CDC Cooperative Agreement No. U1BPS003254-05; 2) NIH grants K01DA043412 and P30AI042853