Disparities in Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Use Among Latinx and Black Trans Women, Los Angeles County, 2019 vs. 2023

Yingbo Ma,MS; Ekow Kwa Sey, PhD MPH
Division of HIV and STD Programs, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Los Angeles, CA

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BACKGROUND

Latinx and Black trans women often face unique social, cultural, and healthcare barriers that may limit their access to HIV prevention tools like Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). Research on racial disparities in PrEP use among trans women is limited. This study examined trends in PrEP uptake among Latinx and Black trans women in Los Angeles County from 2019 to 2023 and investigated correlates of PrEP use.

METHODS

Data source: Los Angeles Trans Women Study, a cross-sectional survey using respondent-driven sampling for recruitment. It aims to monitor HIV prevalence, HIV-related behavioral risk factors, and the use of prevention services; As part of the study, all participants were offered an HIV test.

Data analysis: The sample was limited to HIV-negative Latinx and Black participants residing in Los Angeles County who participated in the study in 2019 and 2023. To assess the changes in past-year PrEP use between 2019 and 2023, a log-linked Poisson regression model was applied.

RESULTS

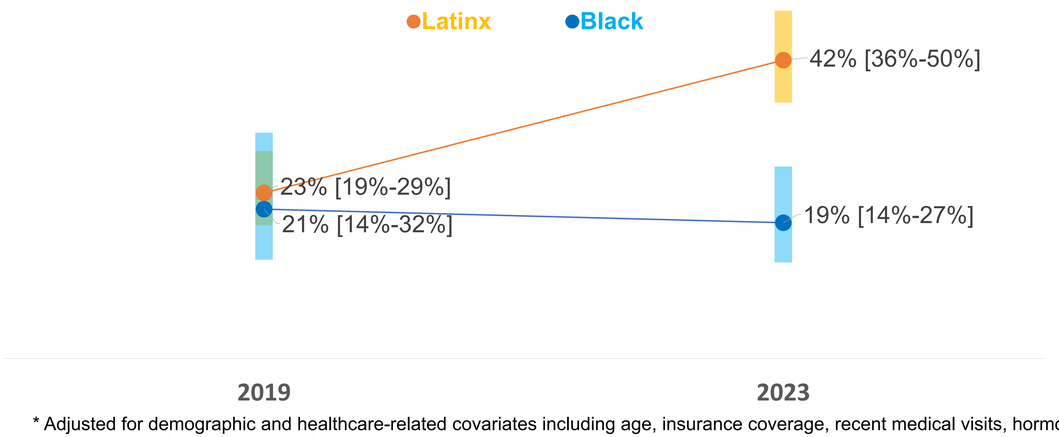
Table 1: Characteristics of Latinx and Black participants of Los Angeles Trans Women Study, 2019 vs.2023

	2019		2023	
Characteristics	Latinx (n=231)	Black (n=64)	Latinx (n=240)	Black (n=111)
Median Age (range)	34(18-77)	33(19-69)	41(18-82)	29(19-70)
Below federal poverty level (HHS measure)	75%	66%	67%	69%
Hormone therapy use past 12 months	70%	86%	64%	80%
Current health insurance status				
No insurance	22%	6%	16%	12%
Private	8%	16%	15%	14%
Public	70%	78%	69%	75%

PrEP use **increased** significantly among **Latinx trans women** in Los Angeles County from 2019 to 2023 (+61%) but **declined among Black trans women** (-11%), indicating a growing racial disparity.

The strong positive correlation between hormone therapy use and PrEP uptake suggests that **integrating HIV biomedical prevention into gender-affirming care is beneficial.**

Figure 1. Adjusted prevalence* and its confidence interval of PrEP use among Latinx and Black trans women from 2019 to 2023, Los Angeles County



* Adjusted for demographic and healthcare-related covariates including age, insurance coverage, recent medical visits, hormone therapy use, and substance use history.

- Between 2019 and 2023, significant differences in PrEP use were observed in Latinx compared with Black trans women. For Latinx trans women, PrEP use increased from 28% in 2019 to 45% in 2023, which was a 61% overall increase. In contrast, for Black trans women, PrEP use decreased from 27% in 2019 to 24% in 2023, which was an overall 11% decrease.

- As shown in figure 1, **after accounting for influential covariates, Latinx trans women continued to show a significantly greater increase in PrEP use from 2019 to 2023 compared with Black trans women.** In addition, hormone therapy use within the past 12 months was positively correlated with PrEP use in both Black and Latinx trans women (adjusted prevalence ratio=1.6, 95% CI [1.2-2.2]). Further analysis showed having insurance was positively correlated with hormone therapy use for both Black and Latinx trans women($p < 0.01$).

CONCLUSIONS

- The significant increase in PrEP uptake among Latinx suggests that HIV biomedical prevention activities targeting Latinx communities have been effective. However, the lack of progress among Black trans women points to the urgent need for more racially and culturally tailored interventions addressing the unique social determinants of health within this community. Mobilizing the Black trans women community to increase access to PrEP should be a priority to achieve the goals of the Ending the HIV Epidemic initiative.

- The positive correlation between use of hormone therapy and PrEP supports that HIV biomedical prevention activities should be integrated with a hormone therapy provision and delivered within a gender-affirming care setting.

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LOS ANGELES TRANS WOMENS STUDY

County of Los Angeles Public Health