



SEXUAL HEALTH SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND POSITION STATEMENT ON HIV PrEP

SHSQ supports the use of HIV antiretroviral treatment (ART) as pre-exposure prophylaxis in HIV uninfected individuals who are at high risk of becoming HIV infected.

Truvada (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate + emtricitabine) has been licensed for this purpose in the USA since 2012 and France became the 2nd country to approve its use for PrEP in late 2015. The World Health Organization recommends offering PrEP to those at risk of HIV infection. Truvada is not yet licensed for PrEP in Australia, though an application is being considered by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

Once daily dosing has a significant body of evidence attesting to its efficacy, though more recently a French/Canadian study (Ipergay) was published and shows efficacy for intermittent dosing in gay men at high risk of HIV infection.

In Queensland gay men should be offered access to PrEP and all clinicians working with gay men should be aware of PrEP and how to access it. Because of the high cost of the drug in Australia, individuals may import 3 months' worth of drug for their own use. Reputable online pharmacies can supply medication at a greatly reduced price with a valid prescription from an Australian doctor. ASHM has guidelines for usage and on-PrEP monitoring on its website.

The QPrEP study looks at PrEP usage in Queensland and has provided fifty gay men with PrEP as part of a clinical study. This number is expected to expand to a total of 150 places by mid-2016. This number of individuals is clearly small and will not be anywhere near sufficient to meet the needs of gay men in Qld. Those individuals

who wish to import medication for themselves can do so in conjunction with their supervising medical practitioner, but this system is inequitable as low-income individuals may not be able to purchase medications in this way.

While taking PrEP it is important for individuals to undertake regular health and STI checks in accord with evidence-based recommendations. The data as to increased STI acquisition on PrEP is mixed, and further ‘real world’ studies are likely to provide more clarity. In any event, STI rates are high in those who would benefit most from PrEP, so regular testing is strongly recommended.

SHSQ calls in the Queensland and Commonwealth governments to work with some urgency to make PrEP widely accessible to gay men and to select others who will benefit from it. It is becoming increasingly clear that PrEP is an essential component of plans to reduce HIV incidence significantly, and so its uptake needs to be encouraged if we are to meet the UN and Australian goals of virtually eliminating HIV transmissions by 2020.