PrEP users in Norway's largest STI clinic

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Background: PrEP has been available free of charge in Norway since autumn 2016. The Olafia Clinic (Norway's largest STI clinic) started an appointment based PrEP service in January 2017. The National Advisory Unit for STIs designed a prospective, multi-centre study to evaluate the national implementation of PrEP and asked PrEP providers in major cities to join. We report interim findings from the largest study site.

Methods:

- PrEP users >18 years are invited to participate in the study.
- This involves answering an anonymous electronic questionnaire at screening and subsequent visits.
- Participation is voluntary.
- Clinical data during follow up is recorded by study site personnel in an electronic database (Viedoc™).
- Participants may enroll in the study, even if PrEP has already been initiated by a different provider.

Inclusion Criteria: Prescription of emtricitabine/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (FTC/TDF) as PrEP according to national guidelines (i.e. HIV-negative MSM/transgender individuals with inconsistent condom use during anal sex, heterosexuals at high risk of HIV-acquisition because of sexual practice or physician discretion)

Results: A total of 355 male participants have been recruited from 5 January 2017 to 31 May 2018. As this is an interim analysis a complete data set is not yet available for all.

Table 1: Baseline demographics and sexual history characteristics

Variable		PrEP user	%	n (Response rate)
Mean age	36.5 years (19-69)			355 (1.0)
Sex	Male	355	100%	
Ethnicity	White	262	89.7%	292 (0.8)
	Asian	10	3.5%	
	Black/African	1	0.3%	
	Other	19	6.5%	
Born in Norway	Yes	217	74.3%	292 (0.8)
	No	75	25.7%	
Highest level of education reached	Elementary/junior high school	4	1.4%	292 (0.8)
	High school	65	22.3%	
	College/University	217	74.3%	
	Other	6	2.1%	
Current work situation	Working full-time	214	74.0%	289 (0.8)
	Working part-time	18	6.2%	
	Unemployed	7	2.4%	
	Student	26	9.0%	
	Disabled/sickleave	12	4.2%	
	Retired/Other	12	4.2%	
Current civil status	Single	206	70.8%	291 (0.8)
	Cohabiting/married/partnership	85	29.2%	
Sexual partners in last 12 months	Men only	146	91.8%	159 (0.4)
	Men & women	6	3.8%	
	Men& transgender individuals	3	1.9%	
	Women & transgender indiv.	1	0.6%	
	Men & women & transgender indiv.	3	1.9%	
Circumcised	Yes	27	14.4%	188 (0.5)
Purchased sex in last 12 months	Yes	5	3.4%	148 (0.4)
	No	143	96.6%	
Sold sex in last 12 months	Yes	8	5.4%	149 (0.4)
	No	141	94.6%	
Number of sexual partners in last 12 months	Mean 31 (1-200)			145 (0.4)
	1-6	25	17.2%	
	7-12	21	14.5%	
	13-24	36	24.8%	
	25-52	39	26.9%	
	>52	24	16.6%	

Alcohol and Recreational Drug Use reported at screening visit:

- There was a low response rate to questions about drug use (less than 50%).
- 96/168 (57.1%) admitted to drug use in the preceeding 6 months.
- Most frequently used drugs include poppers 75/96 (78.0%), cannabis 53/96 (55.2%), cocaine 36/96 (37.5%), MDMA/ecstasy 35/96 (36.4%).
- There was a low reported use of "chemsex drugs" such as crystal meth 5/96 (5.2%), mephedrone 1/96 (1.0%) and GHB/GBL 21/96 (21.9%).

Fig. 1 How often are you affected by alcohol when you have sex? (n = 135)

Fig. 2 How often are you "high" during sex? (n = 79)

Table 2. STI results at screening visit

Infection	Result at screening visit	Total n = 279	%
Syphilis serology	Previously treated	36	12.9%
	Requiring treatment	2	0.7%
Hepatitis A serology	Immune	156	55.9%
	Non immune	91	32.6%
	Missing data	32	11.5%
Hepatitis B serology	Immune	204	73.1%
	Non immune	48	17.2%
	Missing data	27	9.7%
Hepatitis C serology/RNA	Antibody neg	264	94.6%
	Antibody pos, RNA neg	4	1.4%
	Antibody pos RNA pos	0	0.0%
	Missing data	11	3.9%
N. gonorrhoea PCR	Positive	20	7.2%
C. trachomatis PCR	Positive	12	4.3%
M. genitalium PCR	Positive	4	1.4%

STIs reported prior to PrEP initiation

- Almost three quarters of the respondents (120/163) reported being diagnosed with at least one STI in the 12 months prior to PrEP initiation
- NG (n=86) and CT (n=86) were the most common STIs reported

Conclusions

- PrEP users in Oslo are almost exclusively MSM with a high number of sexual partners.
- Recreational drug use is common, but it does not appear to be used frequently when having sex. The reported use of GHB/GBL and crystal meth is low. Results are however hampered by a low response rate.
- Three quarters of respondents reported at least one STI in the 12 months prior to PrEP initiation.
- Approximately 10 percent of participants had a bacterial STI at screening.