

The Impact of PrEP Counseling in Family Planning Care for Women

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BACKGROUND

- Adult women report 19% of new HIV diagnoses in the US but only 7% of prescriptions for HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)
- Publicly-funded family planning (FP) clinics serve as primary care for 40% of their female clients, who have no access to PrEP elsewhere
- PrEP is like other FP risk reduction tools:
 - It is a self-controlled prevention method
 - It enhances the reproductive autonomy of HIV+ people who want to conceive
- FP clinicians agree that HIV prevention is a key component of routine FP care, but lack confidence in their ability to offer PrEP

METHODS

- Demonstration project with the Drexel Women's Care Center (high-volume FP clinic in AccessMatters' Title X FP network)
- Recruited HIV-negative women over 18 who were at risk for HIV transmission
- Pretest/posttest design to assess PrEP knowledge and acceptability (attitudes) before and following PrEP counseling

DEVELOPING THE WPCC

- In response to Counselor feedback and site visit observations, we developed the Women's PrEP Counseling Checklist (WPCC) to ease the work burden on counselors.
- We then compared results for patients counseled with and without the WPCC.

RESULTS

- Most clients were Black/Af-Am (75%), between the ages of 18 and 34 (79%), and living below 200% of the federal poverty line (67%)
- Participants reported greater knowledge of PrEP and more positive attitudes towards PrEP after counseling ($p < 0.000$)
- Participants who received counseling guided by the WPCC reported greater PrEP knowledge ($p = 0.031$) and greater gains in PrEP acceptability ($p < 0.000$) than their peers who received unguided counseling
- Positive feedback from all FP clinic staff

TAKEAWAYS

1. Integration of PrEP counseling into standard family planning counseling is highly feasible and appropriate.
2. PrEP counseling effectively increases knowledge and improves attitudes about PrEP among women.
3. When family planning providers are supported with an effective clinical tool (in this case, the WPCC), they are more confident and effective in their counseling.

ONGOING WORK

- Publication of full study results in November 2020 issue of *Journal of Women's Health*
- Rollout of PrEP counseling, PrEP prescription services, and PrEP training/technical assistance in Southeastern PA Title X network
- Publication and distribution of the WPCC, revised for application with all genders

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