

# Acceptability of Oral HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Among HIV-Negative Men Who Have Sex with Men in Switzerland

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## BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

- Worldwide, Men having Sex with Men (MSM) are overrepresented among those newly diagnosed with an HIV-infection; in Switzerland, almost half of the new diagnoses are in MSM [1].  
⇒ The provision of adequate HIV-prevention offers for MSM continues to challenge health social workers and other health professionals.
- HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) is discussed as an additional prevention option also for MSM; however, where PrEP is available, the uptake of PrEP among MSM seems to be slow [2].
- PrEP has not been approved in Switzerland and the acceptability of PrEP is unknown.
- A qualitative elicitation study indicated that the intention to use PrEP varies considerably (ranging from acceptance to ambivalence or rejection) among MSM in Switzerland and depends on a variety of factors [3].

**This study seeks to determine the intention to use daily oral PrEP among HIV-negative MSM living in Switzerland.**

## METHODS

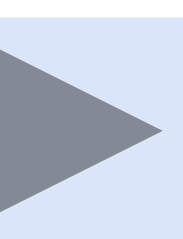
- Cross sectional design
- Anonymous, standardized self-administered paper-pencil and online questionnaire
- Convenience sample; recruitment through flyers distributed in bars and gay health clinics, advertisements in gay magazines and posts on various gay-specific dating web pages and Facebook
- PrEP acceptability was measured by one item about the intention to use PrEP according to the guidelines adopted by the US CDC; answer scale ranged from 1="extremely unlikely" to 7="extremely likely" to use PrEP
- Use of descriptive statistics to analyze the intention to use PrEP; pearson correlations and paired sample t-test in order to measure bivariate effects [4]

## RESULTS

The sample included 556 HIV-negative MSM living in Switzerland.

Table 1: Sample description (n=556)

Variable		n	%
Sexual orientation (n=555)	gay	489	88.1
	bisexual	62	11.2
Relationship status (n=556, multiple answers possible)	single	243	43.7
	stable relationship with a man	283	50.9
	stable relationship with a woman	32	5.7
Educational level (n=555)	non-tertiary education	309	55.7
	tertiary education	246	44.3
Previous knowledge about PrEP (n=556)	yes	405	72.8
	no	151	27.2
Sex with casual partners in the past 6 months (n=556)	yes	464	83.5
	no	92	16.5
STI diagnosis/treatment in the past 6 months (n=556)	yes	91	16.4
	no	465	83.5

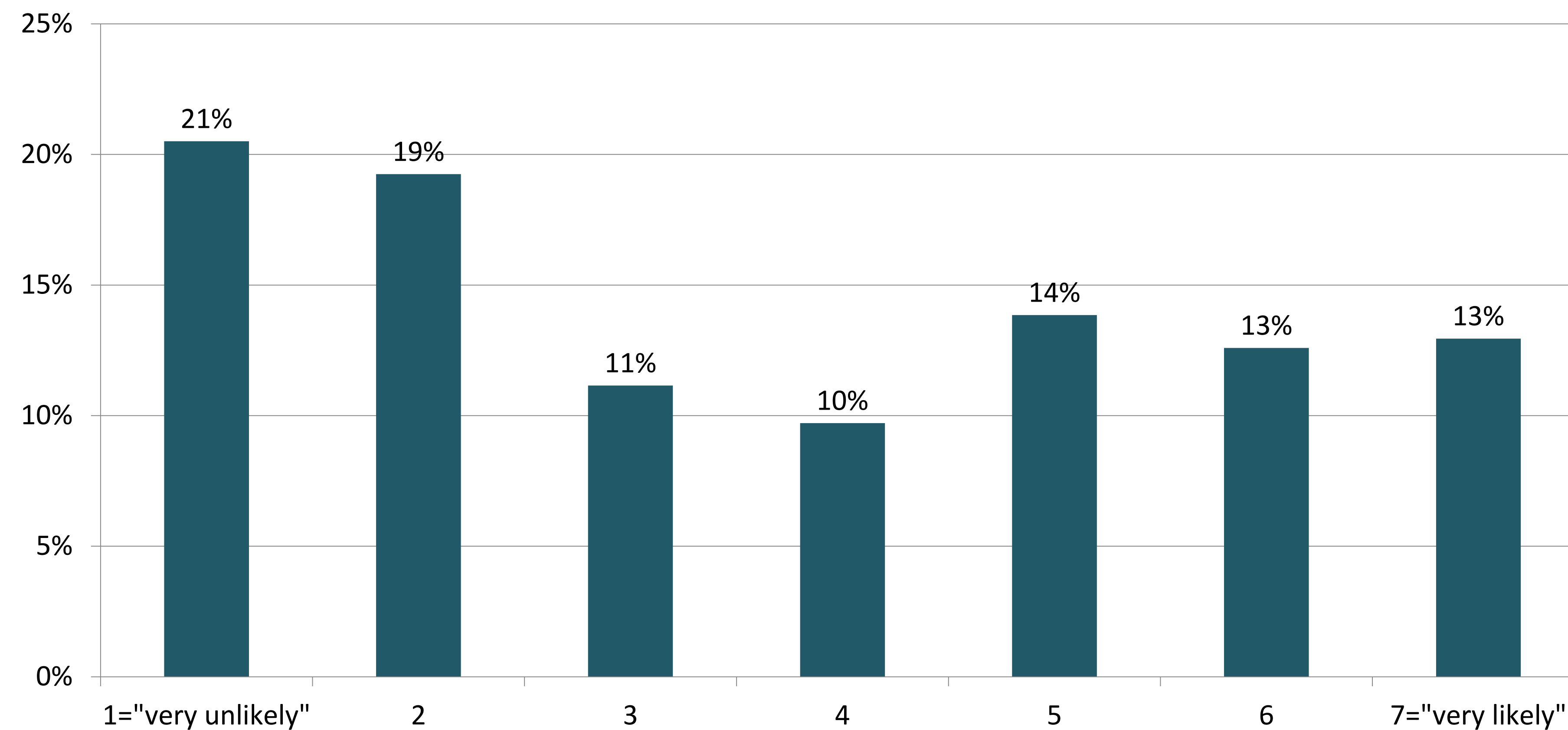


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## DESCRIPTIVES RESULTS

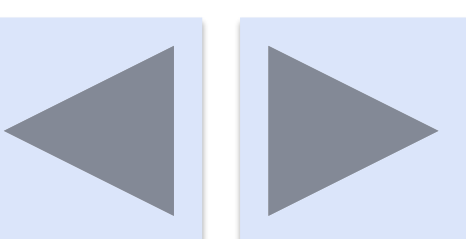
Figure 1: Intention to use PrEP according to current US CDC guidelines (n=556)



- The mean score of the intention to use PrEP was 3.7 ( $SD=2.1$ ).
- 39% of the MSM reported to be likely to use PrEP when available in Switzerland.
- 51% were unlikely to use PrEP in the future.
- Only 10% were still undecided.

## BIVARIATE RESULTS

- The intention to use PrEP was stronger in MSM having had sex with casual partners in the last 6 months ( $M=3.8$ ,  $SD=2.1$ ) than in MSM with no casual partners ( $M=3.0$ ,  $SD=1.9$ ,  $t=3.92$ ,  $p<.001$ ).
- The intention to use PrEP was stronger in MSM having been treated for a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) in the last 6 months ( $M=4.3$ ,  $SD=2.0$ ) than in MSM with no STI diagnosis ( $M=3.6$ ,  $SD=2.1$ ,  $t=2.98$ ,  $p<.01$ ).
- MSM with previous knowledge about PrEP showed a higher intention to use PrEP ( $M=3.8$ ,  $SD=2.2$ ) than MSM who had never heard about PrEP before ( $M=3.3$ ,  $SD=2.0$ ,  $t=2.32$ ,  $p<.05$ ).
- Higher scores in sexual high-risk behavior were positively associated with the intention to use PrEP ( $r=.16$ ,  $p<.001$ ).
- More positive attitudes towards condoms were negatively correlated with the intention to use PrEP ( $r=-.29$ ,  $p<.001$ ).
- Frequent negative experiences with condoms were positively associated with the intention to use PrEP ( $r=.29$ ,  $p<.001$ ).
- Personal income was positively correlated with the intention to use PrEP ( $r=.14$ ,  $p<.001$ ).
- Respondents' age and level of formal education were not significantly correlated with the intention to use PrEP.



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## CONCLUSIONS

- The findings show only a moderate acceptability of oral PrEP among the respondents.
- The intention to use PrEP was stronger in MSM who had casual sex partners in the last 6 months, were treated for an STI in the last 6 months and had knowledge about PrEP prior to the survey.
- Income, sexual risk behavior and negative experiences with condoms were positively correlated with the intention to use PrEP.
- Positive attitudes towards condoms were negatively associated with the intention to use PrEP.

### *Limitations:*

- Non probability sampling strategy; possibly entailing an education bias
- The study surveyed a hypothetical question, since PrEP has not been approved in Switzerland.

### *Outlook:*

- Further research is needed to elicit and model the factors influencing MSM's intention to use PrEP.
- Research is needed to examine the relationship between the intention to use PrEP and actual PrEP use.

## REFERENCES

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