What’s Missing? Investigating the Gaps between PrEP Knowledge, Eligibility, and Utilization Among At-Risk Youth

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INTRODUCTION

• Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) has been shown to be highly effective in preventing HIV infection when used as prescribed; however, PrEP uptake among high-risk youth has been suboptimal.

METHODS

• Data from the Adolescent Trials Network Comprehensive Adolescent Recruitment and Engagement Studies (ATN CARES) research project were used to evaluate prevalence of PrEP knowledge, PrEP use, and PrEP eligibility among youth at risk for HIV.

RESULTS

• Of 898 HIV-negative participants who completed a baseline questionnaire, 545 (60.7%) had heard of PrEP but only 75 (13.7%) of those who had heard of PrEP reported having used it in their lifetime.

• Of those 281 PrEP-eligible individuals, 228 (81.1%) had heard of PrEP but only 40 (17.5%) of those who had heard of PrEP reported having used PrEP in their lifetime.

CONCLUSIONS

• Though PrEP awareness was relatively high among these 898 youth at high risk of HIV infection, particularly among the 281 youth who were PrEP-eligible, reported PrEP utilization was far lower in both groups.

• These results suggest that awareness of PrEP is not enough, and that further action must be taken to address other factors, like PrEP access and attitudes, that may contribute to youths’ low rate of uptake of PrEP for HIV prevention.

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