Testing an Educational Visual Aid to Increase Knowledge and Adherence to Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) among At-risk Youth during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

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Background

- 13-24 yr-olds: 21% of new HIV diagnoses in US (CDC, 2018)
- Adherence is difficult (Taggart et al., 2020)
- Misconceptions & stigma persist (Taggart et al., 2020)
Method:
Demo goes virtual during COVID-19 Pandemic

Baseline Survey (N=150)

Standard Care (N=75) → Intervention (N=75)

Post Session Survey

Follow-Up Survey (8 weeks)
Results - Participants

- 150 youth self-identified:
  - Mean Age=22.5 (SD=2.3)
  - 51% Latino/a/Latinx
  - 81% Male
  - 60% Homosexual (gay or lesbian)
Results- Baseline

- 13% (20/150) taking PrEP
- Knowledge
- Preferences
  - 74% chose daily PrEP
"Visual learning helps a lot more than statistics"

I am a visual learner. Didn't really understand it the other times that people tried explaining it to me until now.

"I thought it looked kind of funny but was a good visual. I think the script helped tremendously too."

"That it was a very effective analogy to explain PrEP, PrEP 2-1-1 and PEP"

"Interesting display. What are the side affects though"

"I should start PrEP again"

"Science is amazing. Medicine saves lives. I don't understand most chemistry but I can understand this perfectly. Gilead should have their patent stripped and PrEP should be manufactured and sold globally at-cost"

"I feel more optimistic about combating the subject virus if I were to ever find myself in that situation"

"f**k, i've definitely forgotten to take a dose every now and then and was under the impression it wasn't a big deal. it made me want to get an HIV test too."
Results- Follow-up (n=101; 2.5 months later)

- Some changes in PrEP usage/uptake
  - 3 started prep
  - 4 lost access
  - 8 didn’t need it anymore
  - 2 stopped with no reason
  - 1 reported taking 2-1-1 (as prescribed)

- More intervention youth answered knowledge questions correctly than control group,
  \(\chi^2 \text{ 's } > 4.73, p < .05\).
Results- Mean Mental Health (MHC-SF) at Follow-up (n=101)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interested in life</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusting relationships</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>4.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good management</td>
<td>4.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>4.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meaningful</td>
<td>4.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribute</td>
<td>3.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society is a good place</td>
<td>3.94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>3.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Way society works makes sense</td>
<td>3.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>People are good</td>
<td>2.78</td>
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<tr>
<td>Like personality</td>
<td>2.59</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

6-every day
5-almost every day
4-about 2-3X a week
3-about once a week
2-once or twice
1-never
Percentage of Youth Engaging in Prevention Behaviors (n=83)
35% reported not intending to get vaccinated (n=83)
Results -

Most Common Reasons for Not Planning to Get the Vaccine (n=83)

- Safety, Side Effects
- Effects on Others
- Mistrust

- Gov. (70%) \( p < 0.001 \)
- Doctor (42%) \( p < 0.001 \)
- CDC (45%) \( p = 0.005 \)
- FDA (58%) \( p = 0.007 \)
- WHO (42%) \( p = 0.050 \)
Limitations

- Lower follow-up rates
- Interactive nature of demo limited virtually
- PrEP uptake/adherence difficult to measure during pandemic
Discussion

- Active visualization (even virtual) may be effective
- PrEP 2-1-1 is not widely understood
- Youth may be a priority for COVID-19 vaccination
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- All participants
References