

# The Ethics of PrEP

## *Vulnerable Populations, Limited Resources, and the Public Good*

Tiffany Cvrkel, PhD  
Bioethicst, Adj. Assistant Professor  
Molecular, Cell, & Developmental Biology  
April 14, 2015

- PrEP is oral pre-exposure prophylaxis use of ARVs to prevent the acquisition of HIV.
- PrEP is highly effective. Studies on populations including serodiscordant couples, heterosexual men, women, MSM, people who inject drugs, and transgender women have taken place all over the world, and this regime has been shown to effectively prevent the transmission of HIV.
- PrEP is safe. It has few side-effects and does not appear to contribute to drug resistance. It is compatible with the use of hormonal birth control and safe to use during pregnancy.
- Efficacy is strongly correlated with adherence.
- As of 2015, the WHO recommends that people at substantial risk of HIV should be offered PrEP.

# The Ethics



**Ethics and  
Cost**

## PrEP: Ethics and Cost

### Pre-exposure Prophylaxis for HIV Prevention: Understanding the Cost

The monthly suggested wholesale price of **Truvada**, a daily pill that prevents HIV infection (300 mg tenofovir and 200 mg emtricitabine: one tab daily; 30 tabs).



*Infographic from Kaiser Permanente, aimed at prescribing clinicians*

- A comprehensive picture of the cost involved in PrEP takes in a broad range of inputs, including laboratory fees, professional fees, and other services, beyond the cost of prescription drugs.
- **The total cost of PrEP is estimated to be about \$18,000 annually.**
- Moreover, adverse events involving prescription drugs can be costly—and PrEP is not without health risks.

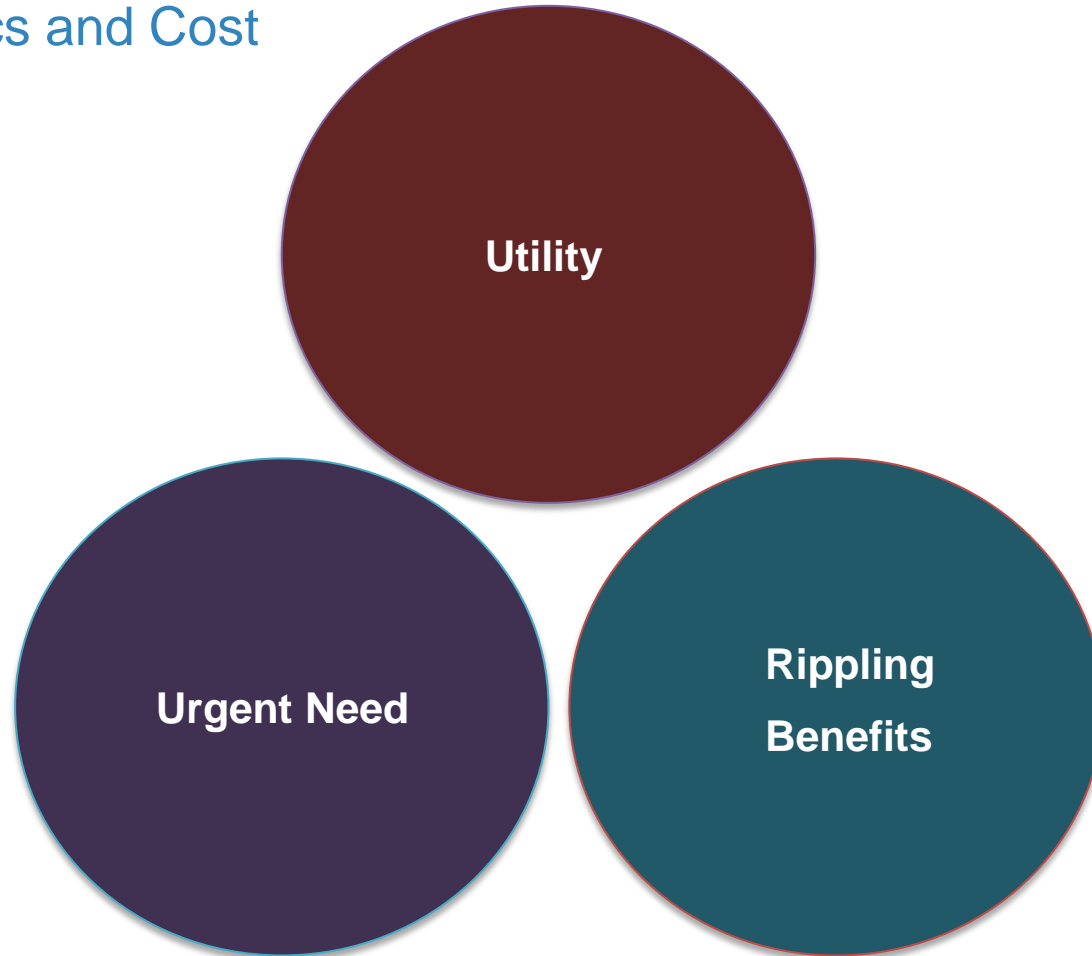
Source: M Horberg, B Raymond, *Financial Policy Issues for HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis: Cost and Access to Insurance*, American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Volume 44, Issue 1, Supplement 2, January 2013

**Figure 1.** Incremental Cost-Effectiveness Ratios for 3 Scenarios in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Scenario	Description	Per Infection Averted		Per QALY Gained	
		10-year	20-year	10-year	20-year
<b>Baseline</b>	36% ART coverage	-	-	-	-
<b>+ Home HTC</b>	Additional 12% coverage (Total: 48%)	\$5,000	\$4,700	\$400	\$300
<b>+ PrEP</b>	60% coverage for 20-29 year old females	\$7,200	\$5,800	\$6,100	\$2,300
<b>+ Partner HTC &amp; ARV</b>	Additional 20% coverage for 25-34 year old males	\$4,700	\$4,400	\$1,000	\$800

Source: Ying et al. (Presented April 3, 2014)

***Situating Cost-  
Effectiveness and Ethical  
Obligations***





# Rethinking the Aggregate

- Shifting from the general to the particular distribution of resources
- The ethics of working with vulnerable populations
- Justice, fairness, and the minimum position



**Compensatory  
Behavior**

Thank You