

STD-HIV AIDS-2020: Characterizing strategies to optimize Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) uptake and retention among key populations (Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) and Female Sex Workers (FSW)) in Cameroon - Mfochive Njindam Iliassou - Johns Hopkins University

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Background: In Cameroon, key populations (KP) have consistently been shown to be disproportionately suffering from HIV and the rate of new contamination is significantly high among them. In June 2019, Cameroon launched PrEP implementation through community-primarily based organizations (CBO) for KP. This module is intended to complement the 11 other modules that are part of the WHO PrEP device. It addresses unique elements and issues for delivering HIV prevention and care offerings to sexually mature teenagers and teenagers – typically, human beings a while 15–24 years. The intended target market for this module is the variety of stakeholders for other modules on this WHO PrEP tool who may have hobby in or offer offerings to at-risk populations of prone younger human beings, along with the ones from 5 key populations (men who have sex with men, humans in prisons and closed settings, individuals who use drugs, folks who promote sex and transgender humans). Globally, the HIV epidemic has disproportionately impacted key populations and their sexual partners. In areas such as Central Asia, Europe, North America, the Middle East and North Africa, new HIV infections amongst members of these key populations account for more than 90% of all new infections.

The few records that are to be had on younger key populations endorse that they may be even extra disproportionately stricken by HIV in maximum settings. Young participants of key populations often face exquisite demanding situations, including criminal and socio-cultural problems associated with societal attitudes about sexuality in youth, compounded by means of behaviours that are exceptionally stigmatized (for example, identical-sex relationships, transactional sex, alcohol and drug use, teenage pregnancy), leading to multiplied vulnerability to HIV contamination and extensive limitations to care together with HIV trying out and treatment services. These problems can also impede the ideal public fitness reaction for those inclined populations, resulting in gaps in areas together with crucially needed epidemiologic surveillance across regions and important research on how to cope with information gaps concerning the care and treatment of HIV-affected younger communities. In each generalized and focused epidemic settings, HIV in younger human beings frequently occurs within the context of a variety of situations which include bad mental fitness, substance use (alcohol and other drugs) and emotional and social issues inclusive of gender-primarily based violence. These conditions can region younger people at vast threat of obtaining HIV and other sexually transmitted

infections (STIs). Although statistics on adolescents and teens inflamed with HIV are limited in resource-restricted settings, it is miles clean that these comorbidities can also make health-seeking behaviours greater difficult for youth

Method: Since June 28th, 2019, five CBOs in Yaoundé and Douala have been offering daily oral PrEP to KP. Peer-leads monitor clients on PrEP with follow-up carried out in the beginning visit, one month and every three months thereafter. PrEP uptake and retention were assessed at three and 6 months. Throughout implementation, qualitative facts were collected to inform techniques to enhance uptake, retention and mitigate demanding situations.

Results: From June 28th to December 31st, 2019, 5,779 KP had been approached within the community and sensitized on PrEP among whom 980 (17%) [MSM (40%); FSW (60%)] capacity PrEP applicants arrived at DIC and screened for HIV chance conduct. 554 (57%) with high danger conduct and consented, were supplied biological trying out (HIV, syphilis, hepatitis B and kidney function). 511 (91%) had been observed eligible and presented PrEP of whom 283 (54%) [MSM (64%); FSW (36%)] have been initiated. 186 (66%) [MSM (80%); FSW (20%)] were retained on PrEP as of December 31st.

PrEP uptake improved from 53% (208/390) to 82% (75/91) amongst eligible applicants in June-September and October-December 2019, respectively. Three-month retention also improved from 53% (208/390) to 80% (60/75) in the same periods. Qualitative subject matters that of emerged obstacles covered low HIV danger perception, capability resistance to PrEP use within the network, anticipated PrEP-stigma because of conflation of PrEP and antiretroviral therapy, choice for on-call for PrEP which isn't always nationally approved, notion of little incentive by PrEP users to attend their normal appointments.

Conclusion: Encouragingly, there had been significant upgrades in PrEP uptake and retention between successive quarters of implementation. These successes have been attributed to a wide coalition assisting PrEP implementation inclusive of the government, USAID, CBO leadership, peer-leads, social influencers, and PrEP users. Collectively, this organization has addressed ongoing and emergent challenges in real-time in Cameroon by using comparing implementation data, facilitating enhanced ability of peer-leads to use SOPs, and constantly adapting in-character and online PrEP messages to cope with mistrust.