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ABSTRACT

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) is a once-daily pill for HIV prevention among at-risk men who have sex with men (MSM). The medication has shown to be highly effective, yet has been slow to proliferate among at-risk Black and Latino MSM (BLMSM). This study will examine perceptions of a new form of PrEP---as a long-acting injectable (LAI)---among BLMSM aged 18 – 35. **METHODS:** Recruitment will take place online and via health agencies within Southern California. In-depth face-to-face interviews will be conducted and recorded via *Zoom*. Participants will be asked 7 to 8 open-ended questions regarding perceptions of the feasibility, and willingness to uptake, PrEP in LAI form. **ANALYSIS:** The Grounded Theory approach will be applied for data analysis, alongside NVivo data processing software. **FINDINGS AND POTENTIAL OUTCOME:** Findings may provide a better understanding as to the perceptions and potential barriers surrounding injectable PrEP among BLMSM.

Key Words: Men who have Sex with Men (MSM), Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), HIV, Black, Latino

INTRODUCTION

Black and Latino men who have sex with men (BLMSM) remain disproportionately affected by HIV and account for the largest proportion of new HIV diagnoses in the United States (CDC, 2019). It is estimated that one in two Black MSM and one in five Latino MSM will receive an HIV diagnosis in their lifetime (CDC, 2019; 2020). Preventative initiatives such as Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) – a daily oral medication intended to prevent HIV- have been slow to proliferate among BLMSM. However, a new generation of PrEP is underway in the form of an 8-week long-acting injectable (LAI) (HPTN, 2020). Research is needed to determine the feasibility of LAIs among BLMSM.

Goal: This study aims to explore the perceptions and feasibility of this new form of PrEP for potential uptake among a sample of BLMSM.

METHODS

➤ A sample of males (N = 20) will be selected to participate in the study based on the following criteria:

- Black or of African descent
- LatinX
- Ages 18 – 35
- HIV self reported status: *HIV-negative or unknown*
- Residence in Los Angeles County or Orange County, California



Source: CDC

➤ Recruitment will be conducted via convenience and snowball sampling techniques, social media platforms, and local agency advertisements and email listservs:

- Instagram, Facebook, Niche websites catering to MSM and MSM of Color.
- Fliers sent to identified health clinic or health agency in LA and Orange Counties (e.g., APLA, OC Health Care Agency, LGBT Center).
- Fliers circulated via organization listservs and email-mailing lists.

➤ A Qualitative research design will be employed using face-to-face in-depth interviews. [Note: IRB will be sought beginning in Fall 2020].

➤ Participants will be provided a demographic survey prior to being administered the open-ended questions from the qualitative interview guide.

➤ A total of 7 – 8 open-ended questions will be used in order to facilitate participant dialogue within the duration of each interview.

- Participant interviews will be conducted and recorded (via Zoom interface)
- Interviews will last approximately 75 minutes
- Participants will receive a \$25 Amazon gift card as an incentive

DATA ANALYSIS

- Grounded Theory approach will be used to analyze the qualitative data and identify emerging themes regarding BLMSM's perceptions of LAI uptake.
- NVivo Software will be used to help organize and further analyze the qualitative data.

POTENTIAL IMPACT: Findings may provide a better understanding of potential barriers and challenges to injectable PrEP uptake among BLMSM. Increasing PrEP uptake is critical for addressing the disproportionate impact of HIV among the BLMSM community.

Proposed Timeline

	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June
IRB Submit/ Approval	x	x									
Project Set-Up		x	x								
Recruitment			x	x	x	x	x				
Data Collection			x	x	x	x	x	x			
Data Analysis							x	x	x	x	
Interpret/Discuss Findings								x	x	x	
Write Report/ Manuscript, Submit Manuscript									x	x	x

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