

FACTORS RELATED TO THE INTENTION TO USE LONG ACTING PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS AMONG TRANSGENDER WOMEN IN ARGENTINA

WEPEd453

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BACKGROUND

The burden of HIV infection among transgender women (TGW) in Argentina is disproportionately high, with an estimated prevalence of 34%.

Since 2021, Argentina has available oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) at no cost to key populations. Despite this and the high prevalence of HIV, the uptake and persistence of PrEP among TGW have been notably low. Studies in other countries suggest preferences for long-acting PrEP (LA-PrEP) over oral PrEP among this population. Therefore, the implementation of LA-PrEP has the potential to increase both uptake and persistence in PrEP among TGW.

OBJECTIVE

This study analyzed factors associated with intention to use LA-PrEP among TGW in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

METHODS

We conducted a cross-sectional study, enrolling a convenience sample of TGW who attended an NGO's HIV testing service between February-July, 2023.

MEASURES (instruments)

- ✓ Sociodemographic characteristics (ad hoc)
- ✓ Mental health and substance use
 - Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D).
 - Screening of suicide ideation, last week.
 - Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)
 - Sexualized substance use (ad hoc)
 - Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-10)
- ✓ Gender identity stigma and discrimination (ad hoc)
- ✓ Sexual behavior (ad hoc)

PrEP-related variables:

- ✓ Intention to use LA-PrEP: Participants responded to one item: "I intend to use LA-PrEP when it becomes available" (Elison et al., 2019), using a 5-point Likert scale (1-Strongly disagree to 5-Strongly agree). A dichotomous variable was created: responses with values 2 to 5 were categorized as "yes"
- ✓ Current use of oral PrEP
- ✓ Previous knowledge of LA-PrEP
- ✓ Preferences for LA-PrEP modalities (intramuscular, subcutaneous, or implant)
- ✓ Barriers and facilitators to access LA-PrEP

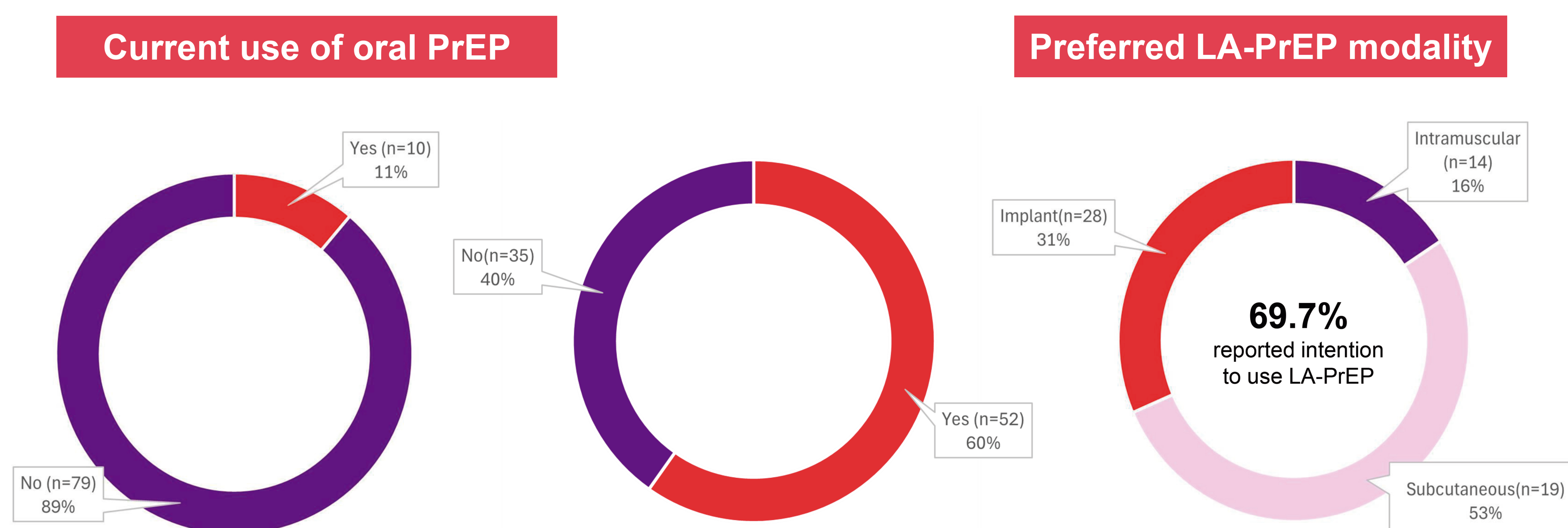
Data analysis: we calculated chi-square tests, odds ratios (OR), confidence intervals (CI), and independent samples t-tests.

CONCLUSION

- Intention to use LA-PrEP was high among TGW with high psychosocial vulnerability (e.g., engagement in sex work, internal migrant, sexualized cocaine use).
- Low awareness and knowledge of LA-PrEP, and concerns about interactions with hormone therapy should be addressed to promote intention to use LA-PrEP and increase its uptake.
- Specific strategies should be developed to implement a comprehensive, gender-affirming, and effective LA-PrEP delivery program in Argentina.

RESULTS

In the final sample, **89 TGW** were enrolled, with a median age of **28 years** (IQR=24-35). Among them, 78 (87.6%) were using hormone therapy.



Knowledge of LA-PrEP

Tabla 1. Descriptive statistics and correlates of intention to use LA-PrEP

	Total (n=89)	Intention to use LA-PrEP		p	OR (CI95%)
		Yes n=58 (34.8%)	No n=31 (65.2%)		
Sociodemographic characteristics					
Age, M (SD)	30.63(8.50)	31.45(8.79)	29.10(7.77)	.176 ^a	–
Main economic income, n(%)					
Currently engaged in sex work	24(27)	21(87.5)	3(12.5)	.011 ^b	5.30(1.43-19.55)
Other work	54(39.3)	33(61.1)	21(38.9)	.318 ^b	–
Financial aid from government	22(24.7)	16(72.7)	6(27.3)	.391 ^b	–
Immigrant, n(%)	18(20.2)	13(72.2)	5(27.8)	.482 ^b	–
Internal migrant (from provinces), n(%)	34(47.9)	26(76.5)	8(23.5)	.028 ^b	3.08(1.11-8.55)
Complete secondary education or more, n(%)	65(73)	38(58.5)	27(41.1)	.024 ^b	3.55(1.09-11.58)
Mental health					
Significant depressive symptoms, last week (CES-D>16), n(%)	37(41.6)	24(64.9)	13(35.1)	.960 ^b	–
Suicide ideation, last week, n(%)	16(18.6)	9(56.3)	7(43.8)	.477 ^b	–
Gender identity stigma and discrimination					
Healthcare services, n(%)	17(19.1)	10(58.8)	7(41.2)	.542 ^b	–
Substance use					
Use of cannabis before or during sex, last 3 months, n(%)	45(50.6)	30(66.7)	15(33.3)	.764 ^b	–
Use of cocaine before or during sex, last 3 months, n(%)	17(19.1)	15(88.2)	2(11.8)	.045 ^b	5.06[1.08-23.8]
Any substance use before or during sex, last 3 months, n(%)	46(51.7)	30(65.2)	16(34.8)	.992 ^b	–
Problems related to drug use, last year (DAST>6), n(%)	8(9)	6(75)	2(25)	.541 ^b	–
Hazardous alcohol use (AUDIT>8), n(%)	15(16.9)	9(60)	6(40)	.645 ^b	–
Sexual behavior					
Transactional sex (lifetime), n(%)	42(48.8)	34(60.7)	8(26.7)	.003 ^b	4.25[1.61-11.20]
Receptive condomless anal sex, last month, n(%)	36(42.4)	24(22.9)	12(38.7)	.607 ^b	–
Barriers and facilitators to use LA-PrEP					
Concern about interactions between LA-PrEP and hormone therapy, M(SD)*	3.22(1.69)	3.08(1.72)	3.48(1.63)	.004 ^a	–

Note. ^a=independent samples t-tests; ^b=chi-square tests.

*Calculated from the sub-sample of TGW in hormone therapy