The Relationship Between PrEP and Risky Sex

Justin J. Fogarty
Graduate Student Advisor: Amelia M. Stanton, PhD (c)
Faculty Advisor: Cindy M. Meston, PhD
The HIV epidemic

• 1980s saw many men who have sex with men (MSM) dying of HIV/AIDS related complications
• People were worried, puzzled
• Little governmental action initially taken

(PHoto by Pete Jimenez)
Progress in Slowing Spread of HIV

• Antiretroviral therapies introduced in the 1990s, stronger highly active antiretrovirals released later
• Does not prevent HIV, but slows/prevents progression to AIDS
• Life-lengthening treatment for adherent patients
• Post-exposure prophylaxis prevents HIV replication after exposure to the virus

(BBC, 2017)
PrEP – A Revolutionary Approach

• Approved in 2012 after rigorous trials
• 95% reduction in risk of acquiring HIV
• Awareness remains low in MSM communities despite its effectiveness
• A somewhat controversial drug…

(USA Today, 2014)
Risk Compensation?

• Much controversy surrounding whether or not PrEP influences people to have riskier sex
• Evidence for both sides of the argument
• Ecological validity in most studies is lacking
• Could reinforce stigma, prevent prescription of medication for eligible candidates

(English Language & Usage, 2011)
Why study PrEP?

- Afford equitable access to preventative medications
- Provide more evidence-based examples of where PrEP is working and not working
- Understand how different personality characteristics may affect one’s risk factors for contracting HIV
- Rates of HIV infection are still very high in certain groups

(Whitman-Walker Health, 2014)
Hypotheses

• PrEP knowledge will be higher among men who indicate sexual preference for men
• PrEP knowledge will positively relate to propensity for risky sex
• Sociosexual Orientation, Sexual Compulsivity, and Contraceptive Attitudes will mediate the relationship between PrEP knowledge and propensity for risky sex
Sociosexuality, Sexual Compulsivity

• Sociosexual orientation – one’s favorability toward uncommitted sex
  • “With how many partners have you had sexual intercourse in the last 12 months?”
  • Rate your level of agreeance: “Sex without love is okay.”

• Sexual compulsivity – a problematic preoccupation with sex that interferes with daily life; increases risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections
  • “I find myself thinking about sex at work.”
  • “I become so aroused I could lose control.”
Demographic Questionnaire

Sexually active? Y/N

No, excluded

Yes

PrEP knowledge? Y/N

Yes

Sexual History/Preferences

Debriefing

No

PrEP knowledge assessed

Yes

Sociosexuality Inventory

Move on to measures

No

Sexual Compulsivity Scale

Contraceptive Attitudes Scale

Vignette (tailored to PrEP knowledge and sexual preference)
Expected Results/Data Analysis

• Multiple regression analysis on dependent and independent variables

• Mediation analysis via regression models for measures

• We predict significant main effects of PrEP knowledge on likelihood of risky sex, with our other measures mediating this relationship
Major Alternatives

• PrEP knowledge could have no effect on likelihood of risky sex (plausible)
• Risky sex could be related to sociosexual orientation subscales, sexual compulsivity, and/or contraceptive attitudes, but not PrEP knowledge (possible)
• PrEP knowledge may influence likelihood of risky sex, without mediating variables (improbable)
Thank you!!!

• Questions?