Removing The Stigma of PREP and PEP

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Abstract

PREP and PEP are medications that have been designed to aid in the prevention of HIV. PREP stands for pre exposure prophylaxis which works to build up immunity in a patients body to prevent the transmission of HIV. Whereas PEP is post exposure prophylaxis and this medication was designed to be taken when a patient suspects they may be at risk of contracting HIV. However, how do patients know if they're part of the population who's at risk of contracting HIV? The way HIV preventative medication has been advertised has been specifically targeted towards people of color, with an emphasis on black men and women as well as queer men. But why? Could this be seen as an attack on black men and women as well as queer men? Or do health professionals know something patients don't know?

Introduction

As I've researched this topic I've noticed a pattern in commercials, pamphlets, and overall education material regarding HIV prevention and treatment. Black men and women tend to be at the center of these commercials, both queer and heterosexual alike. As well as a singular queer person or a queer male to male couple. But why? According to the CDC, on June 5th, 1981 health professionals saw several peculiar cases that pointed towards a disease that lowers a patients overall immune system function. After that, more cases began to pop up across California and eventually made its way throughout the country. By the end of the year more than 300 cases of what we now know as HIV have been reported across the United States. HIV disproportionately affected queer men but not because the disease was a gay disease itself, but possibly due to the fact of a lack of proper sex education amongst adults. Regardless of sexual orientation, sex education was not common, especially sex education that was tailored to people in the queer community. This became one of the many reasons as to why more queer individuals continued to come forward with their diagnosis.

Methodology

One of the ways in which I've compiled the research for this abstract was paying closer attention to the content I was consuming. In the sense that when HIV commercials were running on the television, I tried to look at who was being depicted as the target demographic. And sure enough, many patients depicted who benefitted from HIV medication to prevent infection and treat sed infection were black women and men as well as queer men being affectionate towards one another. I appreciated how the commercials depicted real healthy patients who were living with HIV or preventing it with the help of sed medication. HIV is not a death sentence anymore thanks to the countless research efforts that have been made to help those who have been affected.

Results

Is it a lack of representation that caused this uprise in commercials and educational HIV information which centers black men and women as well as queer men? Or is an underlying stigma at play behind every good intention and camera crew as these commercials unfold. What is their intention behind mainly casting people of color and queer men? From a logical point of view after have seen numerous commercials with these demographics, it seems to give off the idea that these are the people at risk. Not only do they seem to be in the red zone but these commercials give off the impression that heterosexual patients do not benefit from taking sed medication.

Conclusion

To recap, PREP and PEP are two different medications made to help build up immunity against HIV and lower the chances of contracting HIV. PREP is taken daily in a prophylactic sense, and PEP is taken when a patient suspects they have come in contact with HIV. PEP is best taken as soon as possible from the suspected exposure. Who are these medications for? After a patient speaks to their prescriber and sees if PREP and PEP do not negatively interact with their body nor any medication, they are currently taking then both medications can be for them if they are sexually active or plan to be sexually active. Regardless of gender or sexual orientation, these medications can help those who are sexually active prevent the transmission of HIV.

How is PREP best used?

- PREP is best taken once a day to help build immunity against HIV. But complimentary therapy can be used to help lower the chances of contracting HIV, when sexually active such as condoms or spermicide.

Acknowledgements

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