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# HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (prep): Knowledge and attitudes among a New York city emergency department patient population

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**Abstract**

This study assessed knowledge and attitudes towards PrEP within a demographically-mixed community with high HIV prevalence. The study provides information useful for implementing PrEP into existing clinic-based HIV testing and prevention programs. A cross-sectional study was conducted from a sample of Emergency Department (ED) patients at two NYC municipal hospitals.

Eligible participants completed an anonymous written survey about knowledge and acceptability of PrEP. Means, standard deviations, and proportions were calculated. Standard bivariate methods were used to compare acceptability and knowledge by race, ethnicity and gender. The study population (n=474) was 40.9% male, 40.7% Latino and 38.2% non-Hispanic Black. 13.3% reported knowledge of either the term “PrEP” or the use of antiretroviral medications to prevent HIV acquisition.

More people indicated they were unlikely or extremely unlikely to use PrEP (40.1%) than indicated they would likely take PrEP if available (32.2%). Many (27.7%) were unsure if they would or would not take PrEP. 44.4% thought that individuals would stop using condoms if on PrEP, while 27.0% thought that individuals would continue using them. Some participants (28.4%) incorrectly thought that PrEP needed to be taken only prior to sex. There were no differences by gender.

Latinos were more likely (17.6%) than blacks (8.8%) and others (12.4%) to report knowledge of PrEP. Potential providers of PrEP must consider limitations in acceptability to this HIV prevention strategy. Future administration of PrEP must incorporate patient education to ensure user understanding of the technology, its correct usage, and potential limitations.

**Biography**

Yvette Calderon, MD, MS, is a Professor Clinical Emergency Medicine and Associate Dean of Diversity Enhancement at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. She is also the Director of Urgent Care at Jacobi Medical Center (JMC). She is the PI of Project BRIEF, a rapid point of care HIV testing, counseling, and linkage service at the JMC ED. Project BRIEF has tested over 85,000 patients in the Bronx with a linkage rate of 85%. Dr. Calderon has dedicated her career to working with disadvantaged patient populations.