



Building a culturally tailored PrEP demonstration program for young men who have sex with men of color: Lessons learned from the CRUSH Project in Oakland, California

Kimberly A. Koester,^a Damon Francis,^b Mi-Suk Kang Dufour,^a Yamini Oseguera-Bhatnagar,^b Jeffrey Burack,^b Michael D'Arata,^b Janet J. Myers^{aa}

Center for AIDS Prevention Studies,
University of California,
San Francisco

^b East Bay AIDS Center

The CRUSH Project

- The *Connecting Resources for Urban Sexual Health* project aka CRUSH is one of 3 PrEP and TLC+ demonstration projects funded by the California HIV/AIDS Research Program.
- The main idea behind CRUSH is to expand the services of an existing HIV youth clinic (DYC) in order to provide sexual health services, including PrEP, to HIV-uninfected youth.

“Effective HIV prevention programs need to enable people to act in ways that resonate with their sexual lives.”

Susan Kippax “Effective HIV Prevention: the indispensable role of social science.” JIAS 2012

Formative Research Questions

- Will PrEP be acceptable to youth? Why or why not?
- In what ways will they adopt (and adapt) PrEP?
- What will PrEP mean to them over the longer term?

#001 #002 #003 #004 #005 #006 #007 #008 #009 #010

DEMOGRAPHICS:

GENDER MALE FEMALE MALE MALE FEMALE MALE MALE MALE MALE FEMALE

ETHNICITY LATINO BLACK BLACK LATINO WHITE WHITE LATINO WHITE LATINO BLACK

AGE 20 20 30 20 23 19 23 20 20 21

EDUCATION HS CC BA CC HS BA CC CC CC HS

SERODISCORDANT YES YES YES NO YES YES NO YES YES YES

SEXUAL ORIENTATION HETERO HETERO BI GAY HETERO GAY GAY GAY GAY HETERO

Vignettes: PrEP Resonance

- “Vanessa” 20 yo, African American female in a serodiscordant relationship
- Social life: Madly in love; Scorned by her grandfather; kicked out of her house
- Sex practices primarily relies on condoms, but not always
- Interpersonal: sex w/condom is less pleasurable for BF, therefore it is for her too.
- PrEP Resonance: “divine intervention”
- “Ramon” 20 y.o., Latino, gay male
- In a relationship (2 weeks old), BF is HIV negative
- Social life: out, lives with family including 25 y.o. gay, HIV infected brother on dialysis
- Sex practices: will have oral sex (no condom) with online hook ups; bottoms & adamant about condoms
- PrEP Resonance: “I don’t know. I need more info on side effects.”

Lessons learned

- PrEP was highly acceptable to most youth interviewed, particularly those in serodiscordant relationships.
- Side effects was the #1 issue raised, economics was a non-issue they understood it would be accessible through DYC.
- Daily pill-taking was not seen as a big deal - many youth support partners and recognize the importance of taking medications every day – this is a perk of being in a serodiscordant relationship
- Conservative position on HIV home testing - not of interest to youth. They preferred accessing HIV testing in context of a testing site.
- Implementing PrEP in the context of a clinic accustomed to serving people living with HIV requires ingenuity and patience to surmount the administrative hurdles e.g., covering registration costs

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