

Reduced sexual contacts with non-steady partners and less PrEP use among MSM in Belgium during the first weeks of the COVID-19 lockdown: results of an online survey

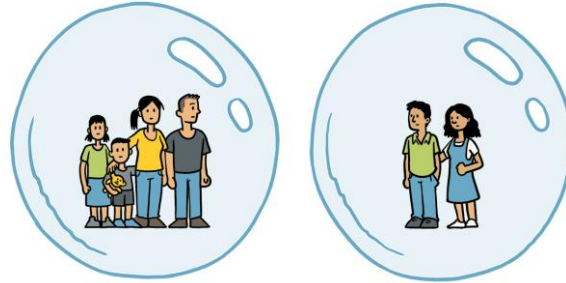
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BREACH SYMPOSIUM NOVEMBER 2021

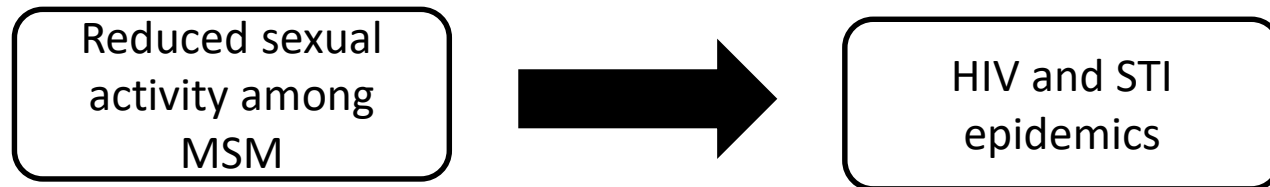
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Background



Compliance to preventive COVID-19 measures = no sex with non-steady partners



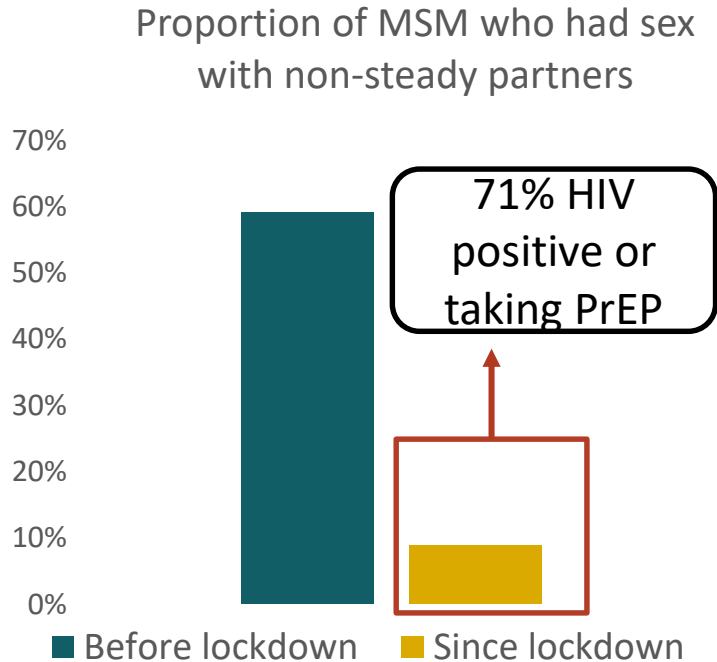
Objectives

- 1) Examine changes in occurrence of physical sex with non-steady partners among MSM in Belgium during first weeks of first COVID-19 lockdown.
- 2) Explore changes in PrEP use and the need for follow-up.

Method

- Online survey
- Available in Dutch, French and English
- Between 10 and 27 april 2020 (first lockdown)
- Disseminated via sexual health and LGBTQI organizations
- Sample selection: MSM

Main finding: sex with non-steady partners reduced substantially (n=694)

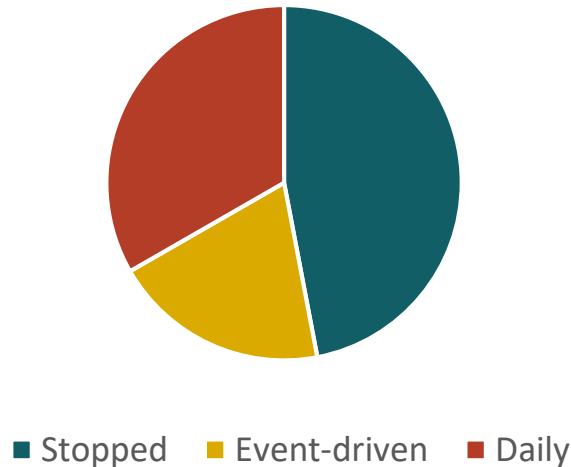


Conclusion: transmission of HIV and STIs may have been particularly low among MSM in Belgium in this period

A minimum of sexual health services remains important for a sub-group of MSM, even in times of pandemic threat in which sex with non-household members is prohibited

Substantial reduction in PrEP use

PrEP use since lockdown (n=198)



- About 2/3 had PrEP visit within previous 90 days
- Only 8% worried about having insufficient pills
- 11% already received prescriptions online or follow-up elsewhere (e.g. family physician)

Conclusions:

- Need for PrEP appointments was low at time of study
- PrEP care quickly adapted to the situation
- Better guidance on starting and stopping with PrEP may be needed

Thank you!

