

War on Prevention Article: Fact-Checking¹

AHF Fact	POZ Fact-Checking Claim	Difference
Behavior modification is a successful public health intervention strategy.	HIV infection rate has increased among MSM in recent years.	An increase in HIV by 3,100 is nothing compared to the peak in the epidemic. Benjamin Ryan makes no comment on the success of behavior modification interventions.
PrEP advocates promote non-condom sex.	Advocates “celebrate” PrEP as a tool to have non-condom sex.	Benjamin Ryan concedes that PrEP advocates “celebrate” condomless sex despite official CDC and FDA recommendations.
PrEP prescriptions are low.	PrEP prescription numbers are incomplete.	Let’s triple the number of published prescriptions. It’s still a fraction of the 500,000 recommended by the CDC. According to Amico et al., “Uptake of PrEP is presently slow in the United States...” ²
95% of HIV medical providers are concerned about adherence.	73% of medical providers would prescribe PrEP.	While 73% of medical providers would prescribe PrEP to a person with an HIV-positive partner, this doesn’t negate the 95% of medical providers who are concerned about adherence.
Partners PrEP had serious adherence concerns.	Being low risk was linked to low adherence, and, conversely, that higher risk people adhered at higher rates.	According to the Partners PrEP ancillary adherence study, “Risk of low overall adherence was higher in participants who reported sex outside primary partnerships and suboptimal condom use, as well as in those who abstained from sex. Adherence gaps were common, potentially creating risk for HIV acquisition” ³
Intermittent PrEP use in the IPERGAY study is associated with high rates of STDs.	The IPERGAY study showed high STD rates in all study groups.	The IPERGAY study participants had a median of 8 sexual partners in the prior two months and reported consistently high condomless anal sex. 38% of the intervention group and 32% of the control group had an STD, which would not be prevented with PrEP.
Condoms remove the need for PrEP.	Men may not be willing or able to use a condom but may be willing to take PrEP.	Condom use data in the PrEP studies were based on self-reporting. Likewise, self-reported PrEP adherence differed from blood levels. Self-reported data are unreliable.
According to the CDC, three out of four MSM used condoms during their last sexual encounter.	The same 2011 CDC report states that only 57% reported having anal sex without a condom during the previous year.	The 57% could have been on only a single occasion. Why throw the baby out with the bathwater?
The entire body of scientific data demonstrates that PrEP will not be successful as a mass public health intervention.	The PROUD study strongly suggests real-world success.	We look forward to evaluating the PROUD study, which includes a sample of mostly white and educated men, once the results are published in a peer-reviewed journal.
PrEP will dismantle the condom culture.	This is a worthwhile concern to raise.	Benjamin Ryan concedes there is a need to advocate for condoms.
Condoms are the most effective prevention method.	Psychologists argue that it is easier to adhere to a drug that is taken as a part of a daily routine than it is to use condoms.	What psychologists have made that claim? Daily medication adherence is a serious public health issue in the US.
If everyone with HIV in the United States knew their status, went on treatment and had an undetectable viral load, there would be no new HIV infections.	Only 30% of Americans living with HIV currently have an undetectable viral load. This is too difficult to solve with just condoms and treatment.	Should we abandon the other 70% of Americans living with HIV? Can’t we do better?

Works Cited

¹ The “War on Prevention” piece appeared as an advertisement in a number of publications. The response, claiming to be a fact check, was written by Benjamin Ryan and appeared on the POZ website on July 3, 2015:
http://www.poz.com/articles/AHF_PrEP_ad_761_27471.shtml

² Amico KR et al. (2014). Adherence to Preexposure Prophylaxis: Current, Emerging, and Anticipated Bases of Evidence. *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, 59: S55-S60.

³ Kintu A et al. (2015). Sexual Relationships Outside Primary Partnerships and Abstinence Are Associated With Lower Adherence and Adherence Gaps: Data From the Partners PrEP Ancillary Adherence Study. *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*, 69(1): 36-43.