Brazil, PrEP, & gay dating apps. A survey about knowledge, access and future use of PrEP among users of dating app Hornet

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Background

In Brazil, the HIV epidemic has increased substantially during the last decade among gay men and other MSM. According to research from the Ministry of Health, HIV prevalence increased from 12.3% in 2009 to 16.5% in 2014 among gay men in cities.

Among young MSM (18-24 years) HIV prevalence more than doubled, increasing from 6.1% to 12.8% during the same period. Among young people aged 18 to 25 years HIV prevalence increased from 18.4% to 28.6% in 2016, respectively. In 2017, the Ministry of Health reported that 167,000 new cases of HIV were reported in Brazil, an increase of 7.4% compared to 2016.

Among young MSM (18-24 years) HIV prevalence more than doubled, increasing from 4.0% to 9.4% during the same period. Among young people aged 18 to 25 years HIV prevalence increased from 18.4% to 28.6% in 2016, respectively.

Methods

A questionnaire adopted from one implemented by Hornet in 2017 in partnership with European Center for Disease Control and Prevention (ECDC), was distributed through the gay social networking app platform. The app sent an in-app invitation to its users asking if they wanted to participate in an anonymous survey about HIV prevention. During over three weeks (Sept 22 - Oct 16, 2017) app users answered the research survey online by answering questions related to their experiences and knowledge about PrEP.

Results

The survey was anonymous, but a few questions were asked to better understand the profile of the participants, such as where they live, their age and HIV status. 3,218 responses were collected. The survey data also shows that 1 in every 4 young gay men do not have knowledge about PrEP (left). According to survey, 24% of young gay men do not know where they live, their age and HIV status.

Conclusion

Hornet is Brazil’s highly vulnerable to HIV and STIs. Young HIV-positive people have low knowledge about PrEP and its benefits. Internet, including especially gay social networking apps are an important source of health information for MSM and should be included in HIV prevention strategies. UNAIDS should be included in HIV prevention strategies. UNAIDS should be included in HIV prevention strategies.

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