

PrEP Hesitancy Among Special Populations

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Background

Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH) is located at 5550 Venture Dr, Parma, OH, 44130. This practicum was completed with Epidemiology, Surveillance, and Informatics Services (ESI) which leads CCBH's efforts to collect and monitor infectious and chronic diseases in the community, as well as emergency preparedness planning efforts. ESI also provides technical support for CCBH programs such as data analysis and public health informatics activities.

Population

CCBH serves residents of Cuyahoga County and Northeastern Ohio. CCBH strives to create the conditions in which all people who live, learn, work and play in Cuyahoga County and its surroundings have the opportunity to be healthy.

The population of focus for this project were the residents of the Northeast Ohio six-county Region 3 (Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina counties) 13 years, diagnosed with HIV and/or syphilis in 2019 - 2023. The general population of Region 3 is estimated to be 2,158,8932 for 2023, or 18% of the entire population of the state of Ohio (11.79 million). There are 6,037 people living with HIV in Region 3 (as of December 31, 2022, Ohio Department of Health).

- declining PrEP at increasing rates
- being referred to PrEP services at decreasing rates
- cisgender women in particular continue underutilizing PrEP (see Graph1 and 2 for PrEP utilization trends by gender)
- Only small percentage of individuals with syphilis are using PrEP at the time of the DIS interviews. This is a downward trend for women: less women diagnosed with syphilis are PrEP users (see Chart 4).

Learning Objectives

- Evaluate surveillance systems and understand the limitations of surveillance data.
- Analyze, characterize and interpret epidemiological data. Collect and monitor the amount of infectious diseases in the community, with a special focus on HIV/STI in Cuyahoga County and Region 3.
- Recommend control measures, public health interventions and/or prevention programs based on the data analysis.

PrEP-to-Need Ratio (PNR) - the ratio of the number of PrEP users in geographic area or demographic subgroup to the number of people newly diagnosed with HIV. PNR is the measure of equity: low PNR indicates high unmet need for PrEP. In Ohio, Black people with HIV, as well as women with HIV have the lowest PNR compared to other groups, which means they have the highest unmet need (see Figures 7 and 8). Yet, nationally, Black cisgender women are facing the risk of acquiring HIV that is 14.6 times higher compared to White cisgender women (AIDSvu, 2023).

Women face unique barriers to PrEP uptake: misinformation about PrEP; low perceived risk of acquiring HIV; not realizing that PrEP as prevention method could benefit them; stigma associated with PrEP uptake; lack of awareness; limited accessibility and more.

Public Health Implications

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Deliverables

- HIV/STI Data Sources Guide for delivery to and utilization by CCBH staff
- HIV/STI Data Report to be delivered in document and presentation to CCBH staff.
women, ($p < 0.01$), though the infection rate in women is consistently increasing