

## Risk Compensation among Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) in Southern California following the Initiation of Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)

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**Background:** A concern of using pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention is risk compensation, where PrEP users may take more sexual risks.

**Methods:** We examined sexual risk behaviors following TDF/FTC PrEP initiation among men who have sex with men (MSM) enrolled in CCTG 595, a PrEP adherence study. Self-reported number of sexual partners by HIV status and unprotected receptive and insertive anal sex acts (over the previous month) were compared at study weeks 0 and 24 using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. Analyses were limited to participants who completed the week-24 survey.

**Results:** The 268 MSM were: 36 years old; 30% Hispanic; 85% White and 5% Black. The number of HIV-positive partners in the prior month increased from week 0 to 24 ( $p < 0.05$ ). The number of HIV unknown status partners in the prior month declined from week 0 to 24 ( $p < 0.05$ ). The number of unprotected receptive anal sex acts in the prior month marginally increased from week 0 to 24 ( $p = 0.056$ ). The number of unprotected insertive sex acts in the prior month did not significantly change ( $p = 0.58$ ).

**Conclusions:** These preliminary analyses in MSM suggest an increase in the number of HIV positive partners in the first 24 weeks following PrEP initiation. However, because there was only a marginal increase in unprotected sex and a reduction in partners of HIV unknown status, the evidence for risk compensation among this population of PrEP initiating MSM is limited. Future analyses will include data up to one year to determine if these trends change over time.

Table 1: Sexual Risk Behavior among Men who have Sex with Men over 24 Weeks after Initiation of PrEP (N=268)		
Behavior (past month)	Study Week	
	0	24
Mean number of HIV+ partners (SD, median, range)	0.89 (1.51, 1, 0-15)	1.13 (2.02, 1, 0-20)*
Mean number of HIV unknown partners (SD, median, range)	1.26 (2.39, 1, 0-15)	1.01 (2.42, 1, 0-20)*
Mean unprotected receptive anal sex acts (SD, median, range)	1.79 (3.74, 0, 0-25)	2.58 (7.40, 0, 0-100)†
Mean unprotected insertive anal sex acts past month (SD, median, range)	2.47 (5.07, 1, 0-30)	2.52 (4.85, 0.5, 0-36)
Comparisons by Wilcoxon signed rank test; †p=.056, *p<0.05, vs. week 0.		