

New study reveals parents' concerns about their sexual and gender minority teens using prep for HIV prevention

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Since its approval in 2012, HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, has shown promise in reducing HIV infection rates by preventing infection

in high-risk HIV-negative people. However, research shows that only around three percent of sexual and gender minority (SGM) adolescents who are eligible for PrEP have used it.

In a new study, Christopher Owens, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Health Behavior at the Texas A&M University School of Public Health, explores factors that may be associated with parents' acceptance of their SGM adolescent using PrEP. The study, published in the journal *AIDS Education and Prevention*, surveyed parents or guardians of SGM [adolescents](#) living in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas.

Owens and colleagues from the School of Public Health, the Texas A&M University School of Nursing and Purdue University, recruited participants through Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays chapters, SGM community groups, and Facebook groups for parents in the study area.

Some of the parents surveyed said they would allow their adolescent to use PrEP if it was effective in preventing HIV, and if there was little to no chance of their adolescent experiencing adverse effects. Similarly, the risk of adverse effects or [drug interactions](#) were top reasons to not allow their adolescent to use PrEP. Additionally, some of the participants had questions about how best to talk to their [adolescent](#) about PrEP use. The concerns parents noted in this study are similar to concerns raised by SGM adolescents in existing research.

Despite the study's limitations, this study is the first to examine the concerns and questions parents of SGM adolescents have regarding PrEP. The findings point to a need for parent-focused messaging through media, the internet and medical providers to answer questions and alleviate concerns parents have about PrEP. Giving [parents](#) the information they need to make an [informed decision](#) could help increase

the use of PrEP among SGM adolescents who are at risk of HIV infection and thus help reduce the spread of HIV among young people.

More information: Christopher Owens et al, Parental Concerns of Their Sexual and Gender Minority Adolescents Using HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, *AIDS Education and Prevention* (2023). [DOI: 10.1521/aeap.2023.35.1.85](https://doi.org/10.1521/aeap.2023.35.1.85)

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