

ATN 157: We Prevent Summary of Study Results

Full Title

Adolescent Medicine Trials Network for HIV & AIDS Interventions Protocol 157: A relationship-focused HIV prevention intervention for young sexual minority men in the United States: A pilot [randomized controlled trial](#) of the We Prevent intervention

Study Description

Until recently, efforts to stop the spread of HIV have primarily focused on the risk of transmitting HIV through sex among sexual minority men (that is, individuals who identify as gay, bisexual, or who are attracted to or have sexual contact with people of the same gender). It is very important that sexual minority men can discuss the risk of HIV in their intimate and close relationships – just like everyone else. These intimate and close relationships are an important part of people's lives, and part of these relationships is communicating openly about sexual preferences, desires, and setting boundaries to reduce the risk for HIV. This is especially true for young men, who may be entering their first relationships. There are many HIV prevention interventions but few of these programs specifically focus on young sexual minority men in intimate relationships.

The We Prevent study was designed to test a new approach to HIV counseling and testing: taking the typical HIV counseling and testing methods and adding skills-building tips and information about communication – with the aim of sharing skills and tools with young sexual minority men to talk to their partners about sex and HIV. The skills-building content focused on developing communication and setting boundaries in current and future relationships. The people who received We Prevent counseling sessions met with a counselor and discussed different ways of communicating about sex, sexual health, and boundary setting with intimate and sexual partners and practiced applying those skills in their relationships. Between December 2019 and September 2020, 318 participants, ages 15 to 24, enrolled in the We Prevent study – half were given the We Prevent intervention, and half were given standard HIV testing.

Study Results

Half of young men who received the We Prevent counseling session reported less condomless sex with people who were not their boyfriend/partner than those who received standard HIV testing without the We Prevent intervention content. They did not report differences in any other HIV risk or communication from those who got standard HIV testing. Young men aged 15 to 17 who received the We Prevent counseling session reported less condomless sex compared to those who received standard HIV testing without the We Prevent content. Young men in longer relationships who received We Prevent counseling session were less likely to report domestic violence and condomless sex compared to those who got standard HIV testing. Most young men who received the We Prevent counseling session liked it and said they would recommend it to their friends.

Study Implications

Those who received the We Prevent counseling session reported less condomless sex with people who were not their boyfriends/partners. There were promising trends for younger men ages 15 to 17 and those in longer relationships in declining rates of condomless sex and reducing domestic violence. These two groups may benefit the most from We Prevent counseling. As a result, We Prevent may be an important inclusion to existing service delivery for young sexual minority men.

Authors

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Support

This study was supported by the National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institute of Mental Health, and National Institute on Drug Abuse.