

Strategies for enhancing effective use of event-driven pre-exposure prophylaxis among Men who have sex with Men as a method of HIV prevention. Qualitative results from a feasibility study

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Background

- Event-driven (ED) pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) may protect against HIV acquisition by about 90% or more when used effectively and as directed. ED-PrEP has been proven to be an effective method among men who have sex with men (MSM) (WHO 2019) at the time of study implementation.
- Pangea Zimbabwe conducted an implementation science feasibility and acceptability study in preparation for the roll-out of ED-PrEP use as part of combination HIV prevention at public health facilities in Zimbabwe.
- Understanding perceptions around ED-PrEP effective use provides insights around the acceptability of ED-PrEP.

Methods

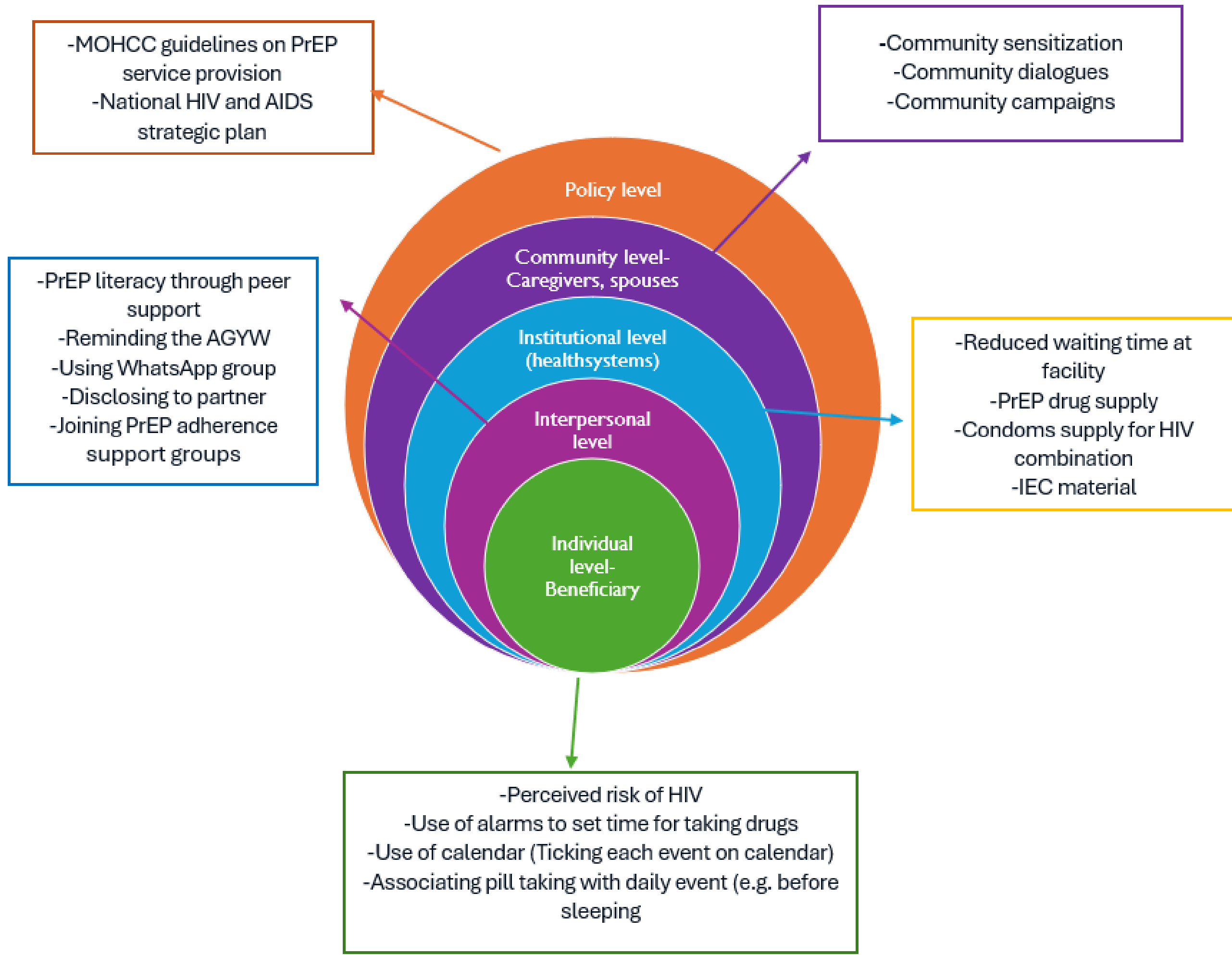
- A prospective cohort study was conducted from November 2022 to April 2023 where mixed methodology data was collected to assess feasibility, acceptability, client and provider experiences and outcomes among MSM offered ED-PrEP. 177 eligible MSM were enrolled and offered oral or ED-PrEP, according to preference.
- Each participant was followed up for six months, where patterns of use and outcomes were recorded. HIV combination prevention counselling and support was provided during the study.
- Key informant and focus group discussions were conducted with MSM and service providers, exploring insights around effective use of ED-PrEP.

Results

- Strategies for effective use of ED-PrEP resembled a socioecological health model. Individual preferences and self-concept fostered effective use due to favorable duration of medication, easy dosage instructions and the autonomy to stop and start ED-PrEP as needed.

- Intrapersonal level networking, comprehensive counselling, and positive attitudes of service providers towards MSM and client follow up enhanced ED-PrEP effective use.
- At health systems level, reducing overall waiting time, PrEP commodity security and client centered, differentiated models of PrEP delivery enhanced uptake and effective use.
- Therapy related factors influenced behaviors around uptake with minimal side effects and reduced pill burden improving effective use.

The Social Ecological Model of Health: ED-PrEP use



Conclusions

- Multipronged socio-ecological approaches and inferences from individual, provider, and health system levels, are critical for enhancing uptake and effective use of ED-PrEP as part of combination HIV prevention. Availability ED-PrEP in addition to daily PrEP enhances uptake and effective use in line with client preferences and changing HIV prevention needs over time. Lessons learned are critical as new biomedical prevention/ PrEP methods like Cabotegravir injection are being introduced.

