

What do men who have sex with men (MSM) taking post-exposure prophylaxis following sexual exposure (PEPSE) report about their recent sexual risk-taking behaviour?

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Aims and objectives



- Circumstances of the episode of sexual exposure
- Circumstances of accessing PEPSE
- Interpretation of risk
- Emotions and coping mechanisms

Methods

- Data collected as part of ongoing RCT¹ evaluating the use of a psychological intervention to reduce risk behaviour
- Two audio-recorded 30-minute telephone interviews implementing an augmented motivational interviewing technique based on Information-Motivation-Behavioural skills model
- Transcribed for qualitative analysis of thematic content

MSM

≥ 16 years of age

Prescribed PEPSE

Attending GUM clinic

Brighton or London

1. Llewellyn C, Abraham C, Miners A, Smith H, Pollard A, Benn P, Fisher M. Multicentre RCT and economic evaluation of a psychological intervention together with a leaflet to reduce risk behaviour amongst men who have sex with men (MSM) prescribed post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV following sexual exposure (PEPSE): a protocol. *BMC Infect Dis.* 2012 Mar 22;12:70.

Results

Master theme	Subthemes		
Circumstances	Sexual partnership	Disclosure of HIV status	Sexual behaviour
Participant's interpretation	Reason for risk	Assessment of risk	
Seeking PEPSE	Time delay	Influence of others on decision	Attitude towards PEPSE
Emotions	During risk	After risk	
Coping mechanisms	Behavioural responses		

Circumstances and interpretation of risk

*“I arranged to meet someone, a **complete stranger**, online”*

*“I have a partner [...] and **we’d essentially had sex with another person** that night”*

*“**anxiety actually works better** with sex than [...] the boredom of using a condom”*

*“I was just **far too drunk** [...] to make any [...] calculations”*

Seeking PEPSE

*“he said **“I’m [HIV] positive I assumed you were”**”*

*“because he said [his viral load] is undetectable [...] and I'd heard about some horror effects of taking PEP, I was **in two minds**”*

*“PEP shouldn’t be regarded as some sort of contraceptive, it’s **not a morning after pill**”*

*“[PEP] **gives you a perspective** what it's like for people who take pills long term”*

Discussion

- Varied responses with key themes and less dominant themes emerging
 - Internet and mobile-phone applications to seek partners
 - Exposure from oral intercourse and “dipping”
- Behavioural skills needed to incorporate condoms into sexual behaviour
- Need for similar research with other subgroups of MSM
 - Commercial sex-workers
 - MSM who identify as heterosexual
 - Older MSM
 - MSM engaging in sexual risk-taking who do not seek PEPSE