Is the World Prepped for PrEP?

April 2, 2012 By Laura Whitehorn

Oral PrEP, or pre-exposure prophylaxis, is when HIV-negative people take a daily dose of HIV meds to reduce their chance of contracting HIV sexually. PrEP has been studied in a number of trials, one of which showed efficacy rates ranging from 44 percent to more than 90 percent in men who have sex with men (MSM; the gap hinges on adherence rates). The biggest clinical trial testing PrEP in women was FEM-PrEP. The study was discontinued last April due to efficacy concerns (poor adherence was recently cited as the cause).

Gilead Sciences, manufacturer of Truvada (emtricitabine and tenofovir), has applied for FDA approval of Truvada as PrEP in HIV-negative men—and women. The FDA's answer is expected by July.

A new MSM PrEP study is under way in France (for info, Google "IPERGAY"), and another is planned for Montreal. Before the FDA greenlights PrEP, we would like to see new studies that investigate adherence. And we'd still like to see more trials for the ladies—especially in the United States where none have been done.

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