Canada and Israel OK Truvada as PrEP to Prevent HIV

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Canada and Israel are the latest countries to approve the daily pill Truvada as a pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to prevent getting HIV. The U.S. FDA gave the green light to Truvada as PrEP in 2012.

When taken daily by HIV-negative people, Truvada is highly effective, reducing the risk of infection by as much as 99 percent. But as POZ reported last week, researchers have now confirmed one case of a man compliant to PrEP who contracted a strain of HIV that was resistant to the two medications found in Truvada, although such cases are rare.

Canada was late in approving Truvada as PrEP, according to Vice, because Gilead Sciences, which makes the HIV med, didn't apply for approval until last year. Now that it is approved, more people will have access to it through insurance coverage.

There is a demand for PrEP in Canada. Vice reports that about 2,300 people test HIV positive each year. Of the 70,000 HIV-positive Canadians, about half are men who have sex with men (MSM), but aboriginals are also disproportionately affected; they account for a quarter of HIV cases in the country.

Meanwhile, the Health Ministry of Israel also approved Truvada as PrEP, reports The Jerusalem Post. In Israel, PrEP is recommended for MSM who don't use condoms, and heterosexuals who don't use contraception. The Health Ministry will soon decide whether to make the drug available to injection drug users and women at high risk.

Truvada as PrEP has also been approved in Kenya and South Africa, with approvals pending in Australia, Brazil, Peru and Thailand. Gilead is currently seeking approval from the European Medicines Agency, which includes 28 European countries.

For a roundup of POZ's PrEP coverage, click here.

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