

WAVE survey on PrEP for women 2019

SUMMARY

A survey on women's access to Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) in WHO European countries was sent to all WAVE members in the fall, 2019. The aim was to get country specific details on PrEP access for women in Europe. The first results were presented at the WAVE workshop prior to the EACS 2019 conference in Basel, and the full results will be published soon.

The survey was conducted online and consisted of 19 questions. In total, 38 countries completed the survey. At the time of the survey, PrEP was accessible in 34 countries. Almost half of the respondents stated that PrEP was available for all groups, while in many countries PrEP was only available to MSM and transgender persons. Almost two-thirds of the responding countries had a national guideline on PrEP, of which 28 % had specific recommendations for PrEP in women.

For the countries where PrEP was accessible, the main ways of accessing PrEP was by getting a prescription, for the patient to pay in full at the pharmacy, purchasing it online, and/or PrEP was provided free at the point of care. In most but not all of the countries with access to PrEP, people on PrEP also had access to formal clinical follow-ups.

Some of the main obstacles to PrEP access in general were lack of information, lack of political support and that costs were too high. Almost half the respondents stated that there were specific obstacles for PrEP access for women, such as guidelines prioritizing MSM, women not seen as a target population for PrEP, and lack of knowledge about which subgroup of women would benefit most from PrEP. Only five countries had efforts to encourage women's access to PrEP, most of which were individually based or initiated by local NGO's.

Thus, women's access to PrEP in Europe is still very limited and not equitable to access available for men, and there is a general lack of information about the use of PrEP in women, both among the women and among health care professionals. However, several of the participating countries describe initiatives focusing on expanding access of PrEP, including for women.

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