

GBMSM experiences of HIV prevention and care in London - findings from an interactive online tool

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Background

The GMI Partnership has been commissioned to conduct HIV testing and outreach services with Gay and Bisexual Men who have sex with Men (GBMSM) in London, including the utilisation of an interactive online assessment tool. This assessment aims to explore GBMSM experiences of HIV outreach and services as well as provide HIV prevention information to the community. The reflection in our research is important to maintain sexual health outreach services that are both relevant and usable for our target population.

Method

The online assessment tool was launched in June 2023. It was advertised through the dating app Scruff and collected a mixture of categorical and textual information from self-identified GBMSM. 835 responses have been received and analysed.

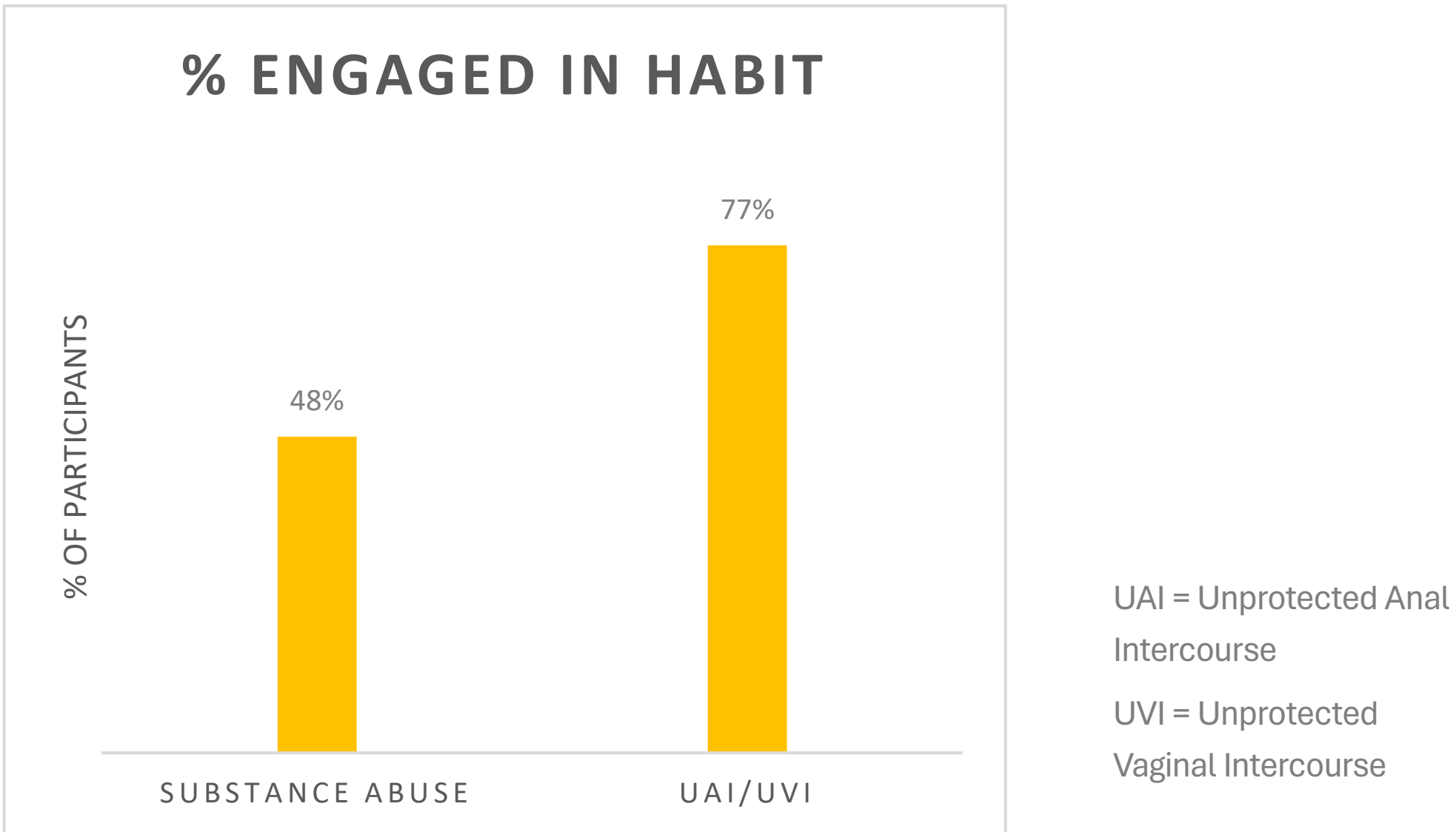
Conclusion

HIV prevention and care conducted by organisations such as GMI has been successful in its informative engagement with the GBMSM community. This said, more work needs to be done to ensure that the relevant medical intervention is available and prescribed to those who need it.

- We support current efforts to improve PrEP access by increasing clinic capacity and e-services.
- Our findings also recommend that a standard HIV prevention and care strategy accounts for substance abuse within the target population, due to its high prevalence in the GBMSM community.
- It was highlighted that GBMSM are requesting more long-term and consistent engagement regarding other sexually transmitted infections such as MPox.

Results

- The majority of respondents were aware of HIV preventative measures PEP (70%), PrEP (76%), U=U (89%).
- Less than a quarter (24%) of survey respondents were concerned about their risk of HIV despite relatively high-risk behaviour.
- 48% of individuals stated that they use substances during sex (such as alcohol or narcotics) and 77% of the total sample engaged in unprotected penetrative anal sex in the last 12 months.



- 12% of the survey population encountered difficulty when accessing PrEP.
- More than half of those who had encountered barriers accessing PrEP (63%) stated their difficulty was due to scheduling appointments.
- 10% of respondents were uncertain around MPox information and vaccination access.
- Almost half of the MPox concerns (44%) were due to confusion over how many doses of the vaccine were required. There were also concerns about the efficacy of the vaccine (10%) and difficulty accessing an appointment (21%).

