

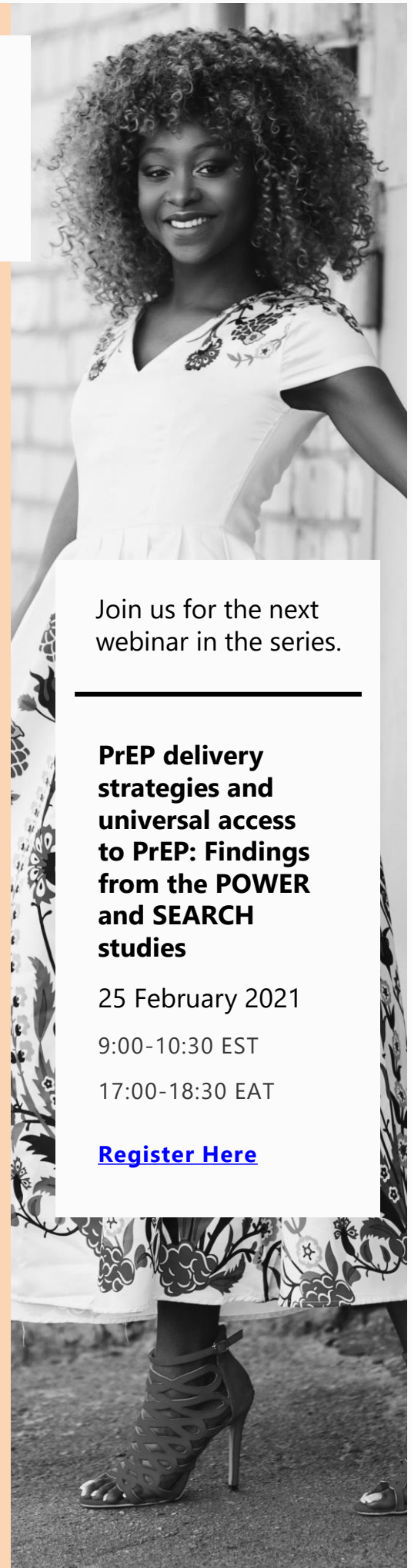
# Re-thinking the Use of Risk Assessment Tools for PrEP

PrEP Learning Network Webinar Series

Thank you to Rachel Baggaley from the World Health Organization, Andrew Lambert from FHI 360- EpiC/LINKAGES, Joseph Murungu from Pangaea Zimbabwe AIDS Trust (PZAT), Hasina Subedar from the National Department of Health in South Africa, Getrude Ncube from the Ministry of Health and Child Care in Zimbabwe, and Sindy Matse from the Ministry of Health's National AIDS Program in Eswatini who presented during the January PrEP Learning Network webinar. In this webinar, we discussed the background and challenges associated with using risk assessments to determine PrEP readiness. In case you missed it, you can access the webinar recording [here](#).

## Key Messages

- Programs are encouraged to reframe the provider/client 'risk assessment' interaction to be more in line with a conversation—with or without the support of a standardized tool or checklist. Motivational interviewing techniques were encouraged by the country panelists, as well as safe space and adolescent-friendly environments.
- Self-assessment tools to review risk may be good models to protect confidentiality and allow individuals to access information on their own time and in their own space, including online.
- Clients should not be screened out from accessing PrEP using a risk assessment tool. Instead, the tool should be used to open a conversation about risk between the provider and the client—the best assessment of risk is a request for PrEP!
- When thinking about PrEP 'eligibility' we should think beyond negative status, absence of signs/symptoms of acute HIV infection, and whether the client is determined to be at substantial risk. What about whether they are ready, able, and wanting to take PrEP?
- Should 'risk assessment' be relabeled using another term? What about a 'PrEP counseling tool'?



Join us for the next webinar in the series.

**PrEP delivery strategies and universal access to PrEP: Findings from the POWER and SEARCH studies**

25 February 2021

9:00-10:30 EST

17:00-18:30 EAT

[Register Here](#)

# Top Questions

Below is a highlight of the Q&A for those seeking more information on risk assessment tools. Learn more by listening to the webinar [recording](#), accessing complementary resources, signing up for future webinars, or visiting the [PrEP Virtual Learning Network page](#).

## 1. Is there potential to combine the screening procedures for HIV testing and for PrEP?

As HIV testing is currently rolled out, either screen-out or screen-in procedures are used to maximize efficiency of testing programs and identify as many individuals as possible who are HIV positives and need treatment. Since the focus is on getting to a higher yield of positive tests, the focus inherently is also focused on identifying those who have reported or are vulnerable to an HIV exposure risk. Thus, screening for exposure or vulnerability risk for testing ultimately provides a large group of higher risk negatives who are ideal PrEP candidates. Webinar participants were encouraged to prioritize higher risk negatives for PrEP, move away from a formal secondary 'risk assessment' approach to PrEP and instead invite a conversation around the HIV prevention options available to help meet the needs of HIV-at risk negative clients. Screening for HIV/PrEP should be considered as a counseling tool and the conversation should not necessarily be about risk but more about lifestyle and what works best for an individual. It was further emphasized that regardless of one's exposure or vulnerability risk, that PrEP should be discussed and explained with everyone, whereby those who report no exposure or vulnerability risk could still start PrEP if they so choose. All clients testing negative should be considered (as part of a portfolio of options to help the individual remain HIV negative).

## 2. What is the difference between primary and secondary exposure?

Primary exposure is where HIV enters the body (through condom-less sex and sharing needles, for example). Secondary exposure is the set of behaviors that put a person in a space of vulnerability that makes primary exposure more likely (e.g., substance use, lack of condom use, needle sharing, etc.). Unpacking these vulnerabilities in a person's life can be a form of prevention, where providers can gauge when it may be appropriate for a client to initiate PrEP.

## 3. Should a PrEP-eligible client who has had recent exposure e.g., condom-less sex, be provided with PEP instead of PrEP?

Yes—in some cases, it is important to screen to see whether PEP or PrEP is most appropriate. If there was a potential of high-risk recent exposure (within the last 72 hours) PEP would be the best option and should be considered over PrEP (continued on next page).



# Top Questions (continued)

Job aids have been developed under CHOICE in collaboration with WHO and UW to provide guidance in determining if PrEP or PEP is more suitable for a client. There are job aids for [screening for PrEP](#) and at a [PrEP follow-up visit](#).

## 4. How can we increase the skills and confidence among PrEP and HIV testing providers? Are there interventions outside of classroom-based trainings that can support skills-building in this area?

Comfort and confidence in talking about sex and sexuality can be difficult to address, due to it often being linked to sociocultural beliefs. In some contexts, it may be useful to ask questions about sex indirectly to ease the comfort level while still getting answers to these sensitive questions. However, some programs have had success in allowing adolescents to talk openly and directly about their sexual journey and experiences as a way of engaging in risk and prevention conversations. Comfort level and practice amongst health care providers is critical in order to put clients at ease during these discussions. In Zimbabwe, providers are encouraged to conduct risk assessments in a more conversational manner, which includes speaking in local languages. Motivational counseling for service providers can help increase communication skills on how to speak in a more conversational manner. Continuous capacity building and mentoring can reinforce what is taught in trainings. Simple job aids, sample guidelines and risk assessment templates for providers can be useful to supplement trainings and increase skill.

## 5. Can Peer Educators/Peer Navigators be used to provide PrEP?

Peer-led models can be helpful because peers have their own local terms in which to deliver messages around PrEP to each other. WHO is currently looking at how/if Peer Educators/Navigators can help simplify PrEP delivery. Peer Educators/Navigators work in social mobilization and demand creation in South Africa and in demand generation in Zimbabwe.

## 6. Are there guidelines on offering Event Driven PrEP (ED-PrEP)?

Great question! Some countries are beginning to offer ED-PrEP. The CHOICE Collaboration and USAID are currently developing template guidelines for ED-PrEP that countries can adapt as needed. We will circulate these to the Network once they are finalized. In addition, we will hold a Learning Network webinar on this topic in the coming months—stay tuned! Until then, you can check out WHO's technical brief on ED-PrEP [here](#).



# Additional Resources

For more further information on risk assessments, please see the following resources:

- [WHO implementation tool for pre-exposure prophylaxis of HIV infection](#): A series of modules to support the implementation of PrEP among a range of populations in different settings.
  - [HIV Oral PrEP Tool App](#): This app was designed by Jhpiego in partnership with WHO, for on-the-go access to the WHO implementation tool for oral PrEP. It is currently only available in the Apple Appstore.
- Looking for oral PrEP risk assessment tools? The [PrEP Watch risk assessment page](#) has a collection of tools from around the globe along with a comprehensive analysis of these tools.
- [Tips for conducting risk assessments](#): This resource was developed by the OPTIONS Consortium and is an attachment in the [OPTIONS Provider Training Package](#).
- CHOICE job aids for PEP vs PrEP Screening at [Initiation](#) and [Follow-up](#) visits
- Resources from South Africa:
  - [The road to PrEP](#): PrEP counseling poster to introduce clients to PrEP
  - [MyPrEP Provider Training](#): After logging in, users can take an online counseling program, which includes PrEP screening and risk discussions.
  - [B-Wise website](#): Check out this platform developed in South Africa that provides sexual and health information for young people. Included is a gamified [self-assessment tool](#) that can be used to determine if HIV testing is needed.
- [Test and prevent global analysis](#): In this analysis, the OPTIONS Consortium identified practices for linking individuals from HIV testing to HIV prevention. This work aimed to identify interventions that are effective, the enabling conditions that support linkage, and remaining questions to be addressed.
- [PrEP providers and communicators should stop talking about 'risk'](#): Check out this article on Sarit Golub of Hunter College and Graduate Center's 2018 R4P presentation on the impact of 'risk-focused' messaging and promoting HIV status-neutral.

We hope you join us again on [February 25, 2021](#)! Our next webinar will focus on PrEP delivery strategies, universal access to PrEP, and the findings from the POWER and SEARCH studies. We will discuss what was learned from these studies on PrEP implementation and delivery.

Visit the [PrEP Virtual Learning Network](#) for more information on previous or upcoming sessions.

