

PrEP and Condom Use among Female Sex Workers: Findings from a Study in South Africa

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Patience Shamu¹, Diantha Pillay¹, Sarah Jenkins², Mercy Murire¹, Kayla Stankevitz³, Michele Lanham³, Kathleen Ridgeway³, Saiqa Mullick¹

¹ Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, ² Clinton Health Access Initiative, Tshwane, South Africa, ³ FHI 360, North Carolina, USA

BACKGROUND



The South African National Department of Health launched oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for people at substantial risk of HIV infection in June 2016. Female sex workers (FSWs) were identified as one of the key populations to be offered oral PrEP. However, the behavioral aspects of oral PrEP such as adherence and uptake are a challenge.

Although PrEP is now available for HIV prevention, it does not prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unplanned pregnancies therefore condom use is recommended. Simultaneous use of condoms and PrEP may be an additional challenging behavioral aspect of PrEP yet there are few data on the issue in real world settings. This poster seeks to contribute to that knowledge gap.

METHODS

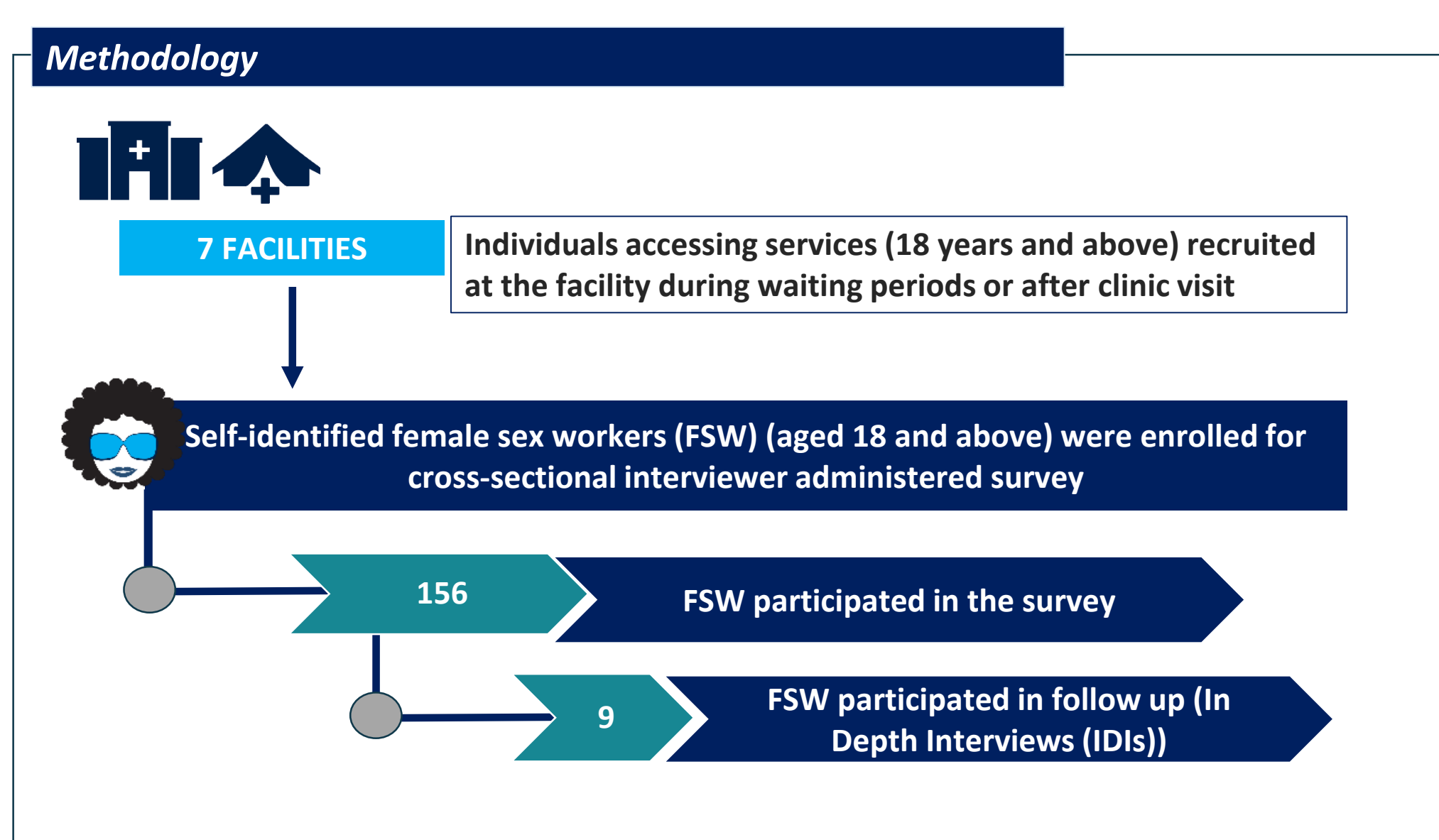


Figure 1: Methods used

Condom use at last sex was assessed for current, past, and never users of PrEP in different sexual relationships (main partner, casual partner, and client).

We summarized the survey data using descriptive statistics in Stata 13. For IDIs, an applied thematic analysis approach was conducted using Nvivo 12.

RESULTS

Sample Breakdown by PrEP Status

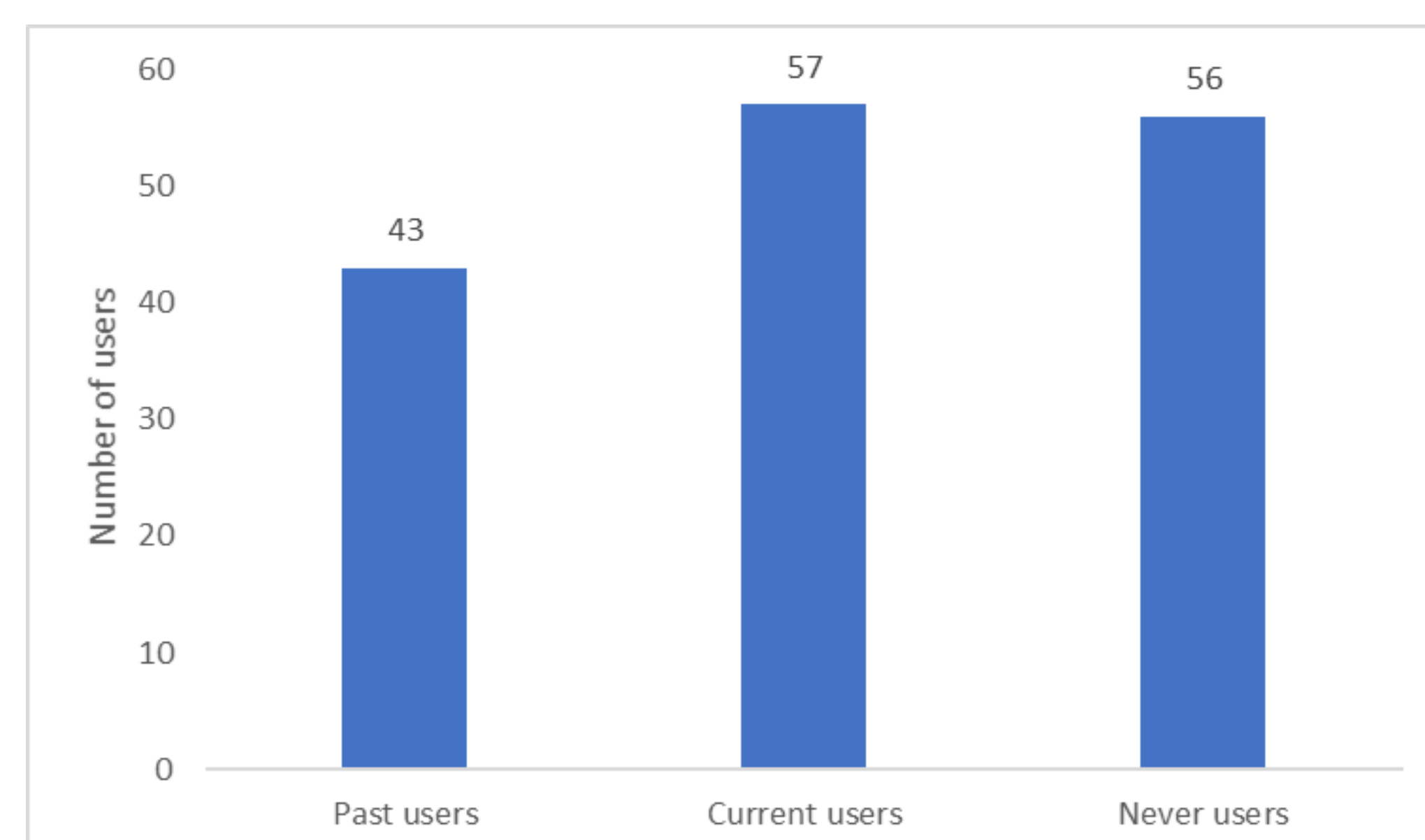


Figure 2: PrEP use status among 156 participants

RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 1: Participant demographics and HIV testing information

| Category | | % (n=156) |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Age, Mean (SD) | | 29.9 (7.1) |
| Age Range | | 18-62 years |
| Education | At least 12 years of formal education | 27.56% (43) |
| | Up to grade 11 | 58.97% (92) |
| | Up to Primary School | 10.90% (17) |
| | No formal schooling | 2.56% (4) |
| Relationship Status | Single / Never Married | 65.38% (102) |
| | In a relationship | 30.13% (47) |
| | Married | 3.21% (5) |
| | Other | 1.28% (2) |
| Tested for HIV | Ever Tested | 97.0% (151) |
| | Tested in the past 6 months | 86.1% (131) |

CONDOM USE AT LAST SEX

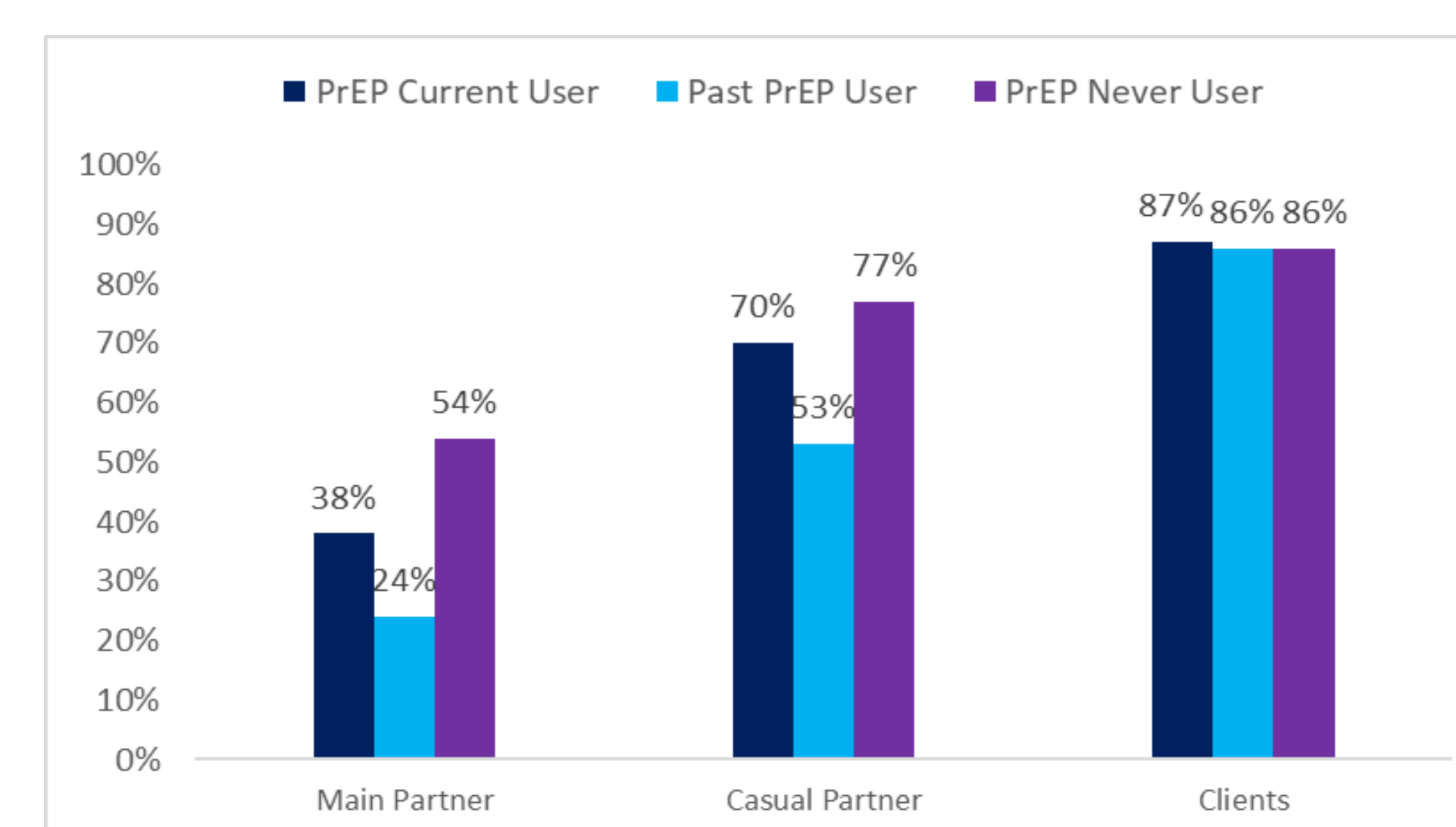


Figure 3: Condom use at last sex

Condom Use with Clients

In the survey, over 80% of FSW (n=140) said that they used a condom the last time they had sex with a client; these proportions as shown in Figure 2 above were similar among current PrEP users, past PrEP users, and PrEP never users.

Condom Use with Main or Casual Partners

Among those with main (n=85/98) or casual (n=64/97) partners, condom use was higher with casual partners overall, and was higher for PrEP never users and PrEP current users compared to PrEP past users. Condom use was lowest with main partners, and in IDIs some FSW reported that in relationships with main partners, it was challenging to use condoms.

CONDOM USE AND PrEP

Most current PrEP users reported that it was easy to use PrEP and condoms simultaneously with main partners and clients. However, in IDIs many noted that clients removed condoms and offered more money to "trick" or "tempt" participants into having sex without them. When asked which method worked better for them (condoms, PrEP, or both), most PrEP current users preferred both methods as depicted in Figure 4.



RESULTS

HIV PREVENTION METHOD CHOICES

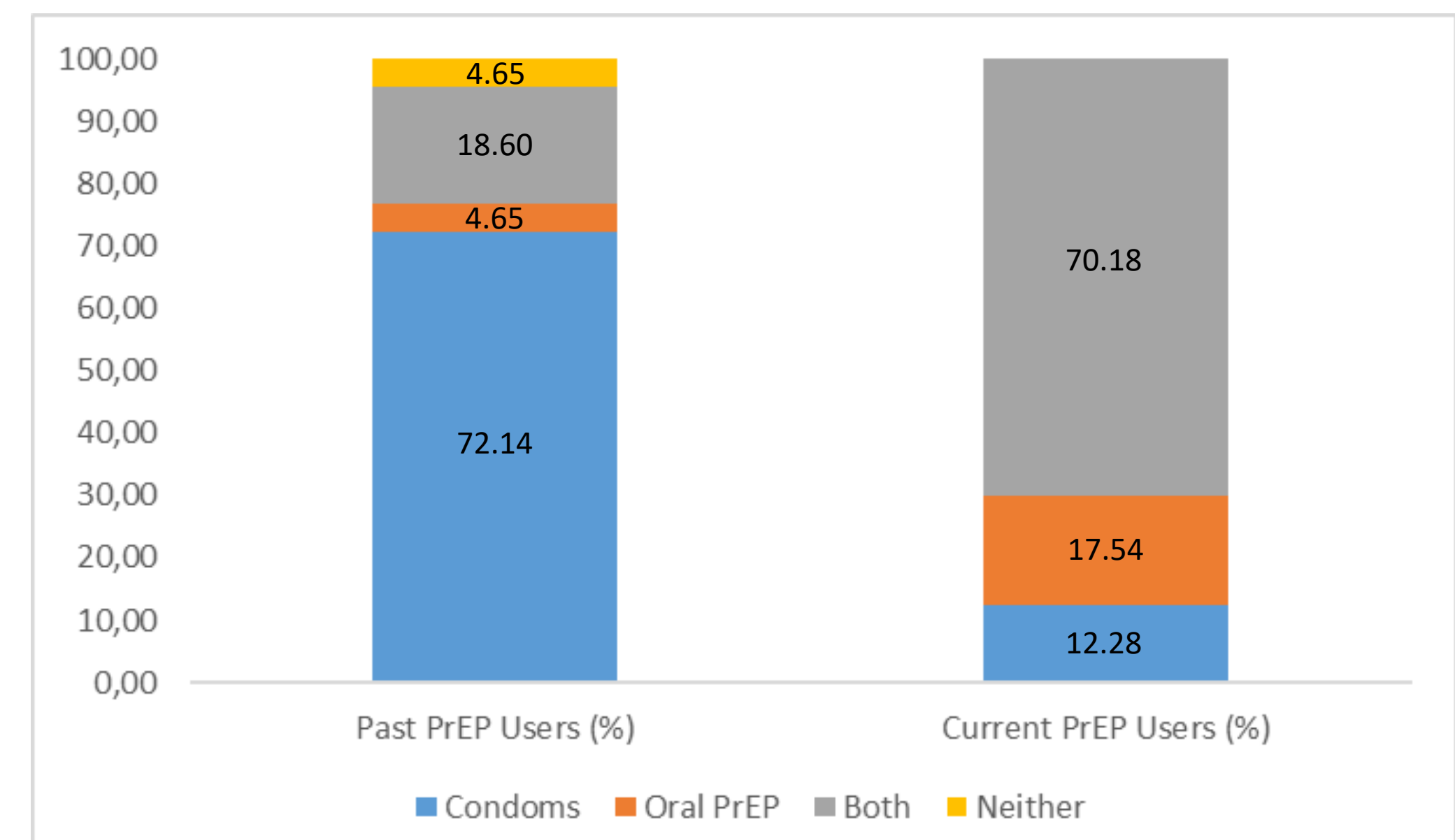
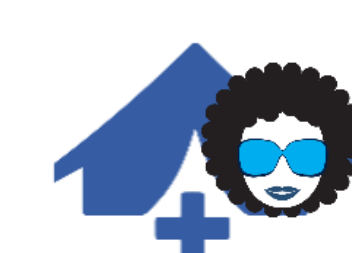


Figure 4: Participants' preferences for HIV prevention

However, only a few past PrEP users preferred both, and many preferred condoms alone. In the IDIs, one FSW described the challenge of using condoms when the client is aware that she is on PrEP:



"I don't tell my clients....

Because they'll want to know in detail and ... then they'll want to change your mind or tempt you into sexing without a condom by offering you more money, saying things like 'but you are protected from infections and my own status is negative...blah blah blah so let's just do it skin to skin.' No way I'm not protecting myself although more money is tempting hey."

(30 year old FSW, current PrEP user)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- PrEP current users are able to use PrEP with condoms.
- Condom use was higher with FSW clients, less with casual partners, and lowest with main partners across all groups.
- PrEP past users reported lowest condom use with main partners, casual partners, and clients compared to PrEP current and never users.

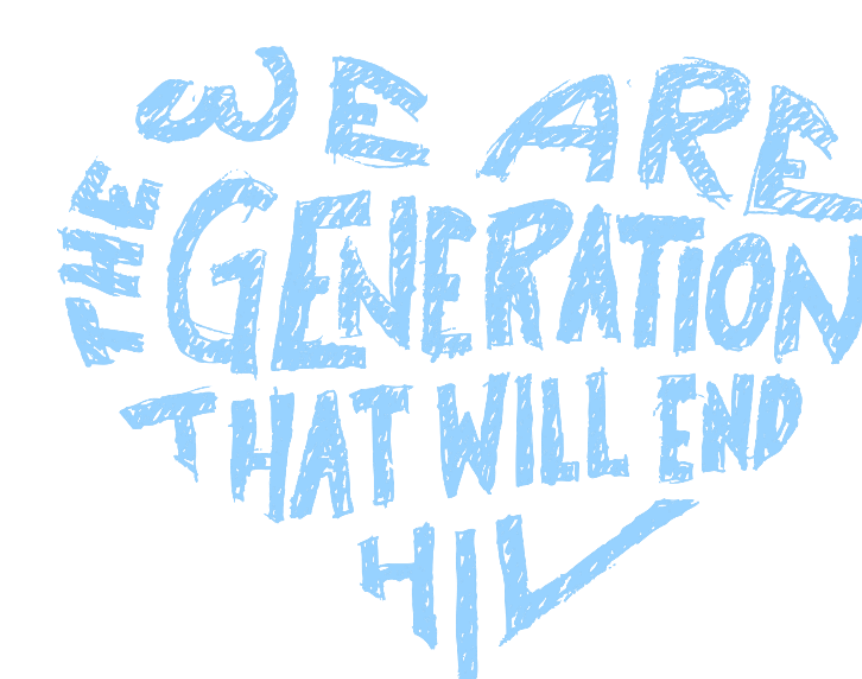
CONCLUSIONS

Current PrEP users seem to be able to use oral PrEP and condoms simultaneously.

Low condom use with main partners may result in STIs and unwanted pregnancies for women not on any form of contraception, therefore condom use should be encouraged.

Condom use among the PrEP past users is low, which could be an indication of a struggle with user-dependent interventions among the group. Behavioural interventions targeted at such groups could assist in the HIV prevention efforts.

Future research should seek to explore whether these findings are consistent across populations and to understand changes in condom use over time and the associations with risk perception with different types of partners.



Corresponding Author:
Patience Shamu
(pshamu@wrhi.ac.za) and
Diantha Pillay
(dpillay@wrhi.ac.za)