

HIV & Hepatitis in the Americas 2018

10-21 April 2018
Mexico City, Mexico

HIV
HEP
AMERICAS
2018

LIVE BETTER KNOWING: A BRAZILIAN EXPERIENCE WITH COMBINATION PREVENTION THROUGH OUTREACH ACTIONS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NGOS

Calixto, Diego Agostinho¹; Pasini, Elisiane Nelcina¹; Sousa, Carina Bernardes¹; Giugliani, Silvia¹; Schwartz Benzaken, Adele¹.

¹Department of Surveillance, Prevention and Control of STIs, HIV / AIDS and Viral Hepatitis, Ministry of Health of Brazil (MoH Brazil), Brasília, Brazil.

BACKGROUND:

The HIV epidemics in Brazil is concentrated in key populations at greater vulnerability who experience barriers to access healthcare services, thus increasing their risk of HIV infection. The Live Better Knowing (LBK) project (Viva Melhor Sabendo) is characterized as a Combination Prevention strategy for key populations (cisgender sex workers, users of alcohol and other drugs, transgender people, gay men and other men who have sex with men, and adolescents and young people at risk) in partnership with NGOs. It has proven to be a outreach offer of community-based Combination Prevention, for the populations most affected by HIV, respecting their cultural differences, the local dynamics, and minimizing the impacts of the HIV epidemics.



MATERIALS AND METHODS:

The LBK strategy is a national initiative launched by the Ministry of Health in 2013 and, up to now, a total of 159 projects have been funded. In this strategy, the NGOs offer HIV testing, sexual education, counseling, distribution of prevention inputs, referral of individuals for psycho-social support, post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), and Sexually Transmitted Infections prophylaxis. They also monitor these people's links to healthcare services: from diagnosis to treatment. HIV testing is free and confidential, conducted in places where the key population socializes, and is based on peer education methodology.

RESULTS:

Because this strategy is carried out by peers in social venues and in alternative periods of the day, LBK has increased knowledge and acceptance of Combination Prevention by key populations, expanding their access to healthcare services through the offer of free HIV testing using oral fluids along with information about Combination Prevention. This has played an important role in the functioning of the Unified Health System (SUS).

CONCLUSIONS:

The number of positive HIV tests found during the Project (2,378) – five times greater than in the general population – reinforces the need for Combination Prevention strategies designed for populations with higher HIV prevalence and the need to scale up outside-the-walls strategies, like the LBK, reaching the necessary capillarity to impact the HIV epidemics in a continental country such as Brazil.