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Letter to the Editor

Do we promote pre-exposition prophylaxis in the emergency service?



¿Se promueve la profilaxis pre-exposición en los servicios de urgencias hospitalarias?

Dear Editor,

In the original article, “Experiencia de un programa de profilaxis pre-exposición en una unidad de virus de la inmunodeficiencia humana hospitalaria. Descripción del perfil basal del usuario e identificación de oportunidades de mejora” [Experience of a pre-exposure prophylaxis programme in a human immunodeficiency virus hospital unit. Description of the user's baseline profile and identification of opportunities for improvement],¹ the authors explain that there were five possible origins for referral to a pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) consultation: from a hospital consultation, on the person's own initiative or suggestion by friends, from his or her primary care physician, from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or from a community centre (Table 1 of the article). We believe that it would be interesting to find out how many patients who accessed this consultation were referred from the accident and emergency department. As is well known, accident and emergency departments are places where “missed opportunities” often occur regarding early diagnosis and prevention of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection and other sexually transmitted infections.² In the United Kingdom, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has been recommending routine HIV testing in all accident and emergency departments in high-prevalence areas since 2016.³ Therefore, as the authors themselves recognise, there are fur-

ther opportunities for improving the implementation of pre-exposure prophylaxis programmes.

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Javier Velasco Montes^{a,*}, Silvia González Díez^b,
Elena Rivas Cilleros^c

^a Departamento de Enfermedades Infecciosas, Hospital Universitario San Pedro, Logroño, Spain

^b Servicio Riojano de Salud, Logroño, Spain

^c Hospital Universitario Marqués de Valdecilla, Servicio Cántabro de Salud, Santander, Spain

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: javier.velasco.montes@hotmail.com (J. Velasco Montes).

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Reply to: “Do we promote pre-exposition prophylaxis in the emergency service?”



Respuesta a «¿Se promueve la profilaxis preexposición en los servicios de urgencias hospitalarias?»

Dear Editor,

It was with interest that we read the letter by Javier Velasco et al. in reference to our article, “Experiencia de un programa de profilaxis preexposición en una unidad de virus de la inmunodeficiencia humana hospitalaria. Descripción del perfil basal del usuario e identificación de

oportunidades de mejora” [Experience of a pre-exposure prophylaxis programme in a human immunodeficiency virus hospital unit. Description of the user's baseline profile and identification of opportunities for improvement],¹ and we would like to make the following clarifications:

The group of people referred from a hospital consultation consists of people seen in the accident and emergency department with symptoms consistent with a sexually transmitted infection (STI) or who requested post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) assessment after risky sexual contact. These are individuals that we already identified as potential candidates to participate in the PrEP programme as soon as it was available at our centre. This fact justifies the high percentage of people initially included in our cohort with this history, almost half (45%), markedly higher than that reported in other series.

Both demand for PEP and STIs assessed in an accident and emergency department clearly identify people who are eligible for a rapid HIV diagnostic test, as has recently been demonstrated in our setting,² and the possibility of offering participation in a PrEP programme in the event of a negative result. We are aware that due to the overburdened nature of these services, the lack of time to offer advice or lack of awareness due to the high staff turnover, patients are not informed about the existence of this preventive strategy and the healthcare pathway to access it.

There are other opportunities for referral from the accident and emergency department that we did not include in our paper, related to recommendations about PrEP for patients seen after intoxication by recreational substances, and when identifying the use of drugs in the sexual context or certain risky practices.

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It is very important to stress the need to ask anyone who comes to a consultation about his or her sexual practices and risky behaviours for contracting STIs without judgement and with respect. In this regard, it is essential to continue working on training and acquisition of cultural skills for interviewing patients, educate on general preventive measures and not miss opportunities to make a connection to the health system for people who need it.

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Montserrat Laguno^{a,b,*}, Ainoa Ugarte^a,
María Martínez-Rebollar^a, Elisa de Lazzari^a, Josep Mallolas^{a,b}

^a *Unidad de VIH, Hospital Clínic, Barcelona, Spain*

^b *IDIBAPS, Universidad de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain*

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: mlaguno@clinic.cat (M. Laguno).

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