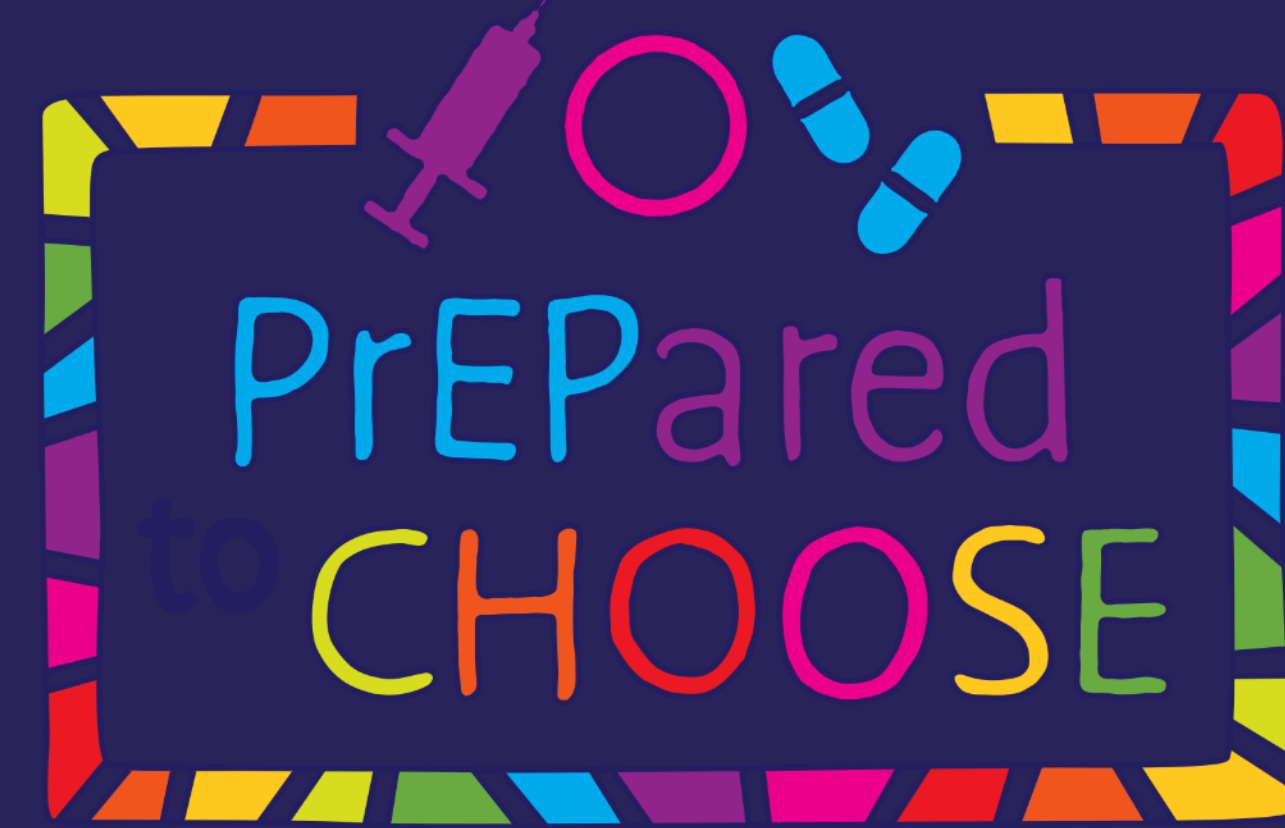


Characteristics of early non-persistors on Cabotegravir long-acting (injectable PrEP) compared to persistent users in the PrEPared to Choose study, Cape Town, South Africa.

Pike C, Lebelo K, Rousseau, E. Macdonald P, Mapukata P, Vanto O, Bekker LG.
Desmond Tutu Health Foundation, Cape Town, South Africa.



FASTPrEP
Don't delay - get protected today!

Injectable pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) products promised improved PrEP uptake and persistence compared to daily oral PrEP.

Yet – the implications of non-return may be greater for injectable Cabotegravir long-acting (CAB LA):

- CAB LA provides protection from HIV acquisition for eight weeks → residual Cabotegravir concentrations present up to a year post-injection
- HIV seroconversion while CAB LA is circulating but not protective may result in resistance to the integrase inhibitor class of antiretrovirals → potential compromise of future HIV treatment.

METHODS

PrEPared to Choose (PtC), a phase 3B clinical trial, tracked uptake and persistence of three PrEP products

- ❖ daily oral PrEP
- ❖ monthly intra-vaginal DapiRing
- ❖ injectable PrEP – 8 weekly CAB LA

amongst 1164 South African adolescents and young people (age ≥15 years) via a nurse-driven, integrated sexual and reproductive health (SRH) service from two community-based sites (mobile clinic; government clinic) in Cape Town, South Africa.



Image 1: Youth-friendly mobile clinic from which the PrEPared to Choose study is delivered, on location.

Real world simulation of PrEP choice

- Free of charge PrEP service** → no research-related reimbursement (one of the first real-world implementation studies to simulate standard of care).
- Non-randomised cohort:** free, supported choice between the three PrEP products
 - Unlimited option to switch products at any future study visit.
 - Structured, comprehensive choice counselling at baseline with an HIV counsellor (30-minute session supported by a self-administered PrEP quiz and PrEP readiness assessment). Pike et al., HIVR4P 2024 poster TUPE092.
- Safety:**
 - Counselling on safe cessation of CAB LA
 - Product-specific brochure with safe stopping instructions provided.
 - Dedicated study WhatsApp line to ask questions.
- Minimal retention efforts:**
 - Study visit appointment card.
 - 1x automated SMS 7 days before scheduled appointment.
 - Follow up safety calls if >7 days passed.



Image 2: PrEPared to Choose study visit appointment card

Who were the PrEPared to Choose participants?

- 1164 participants enrolled between February and August 2024 (70% **mobile clinic**; 30% community health clinic).
- Baseline **injectable PrEP** uptake (74%) exceeded that of shorter-acting agents (**oral PrEP** 25%; **DapiRing** 1%).
- Participants were predominantly **young women** (67%,779/1164) and **PrEP inexperienced** (59%,691/1164).
- PrEP product preference was most influenced by **compatibility with lifestyle**. ≥ 80% reported high product interest product and high confidence in ability to use it as intended.

Over a third (37%) of 1164 PrEP initiated participants did not return after the first visit.

26% of CAB LA initiators, **68%** of oral PrEP initiators, and **75%** of DapiRing initiators did not return for subsequent PrEP visits.

The odds of CAB LA initiators ever returning was **6.06 (95% CI: 4.55; 8.06)** compared to initiators on shorter acting agents (oral PrEP or DapiRing).

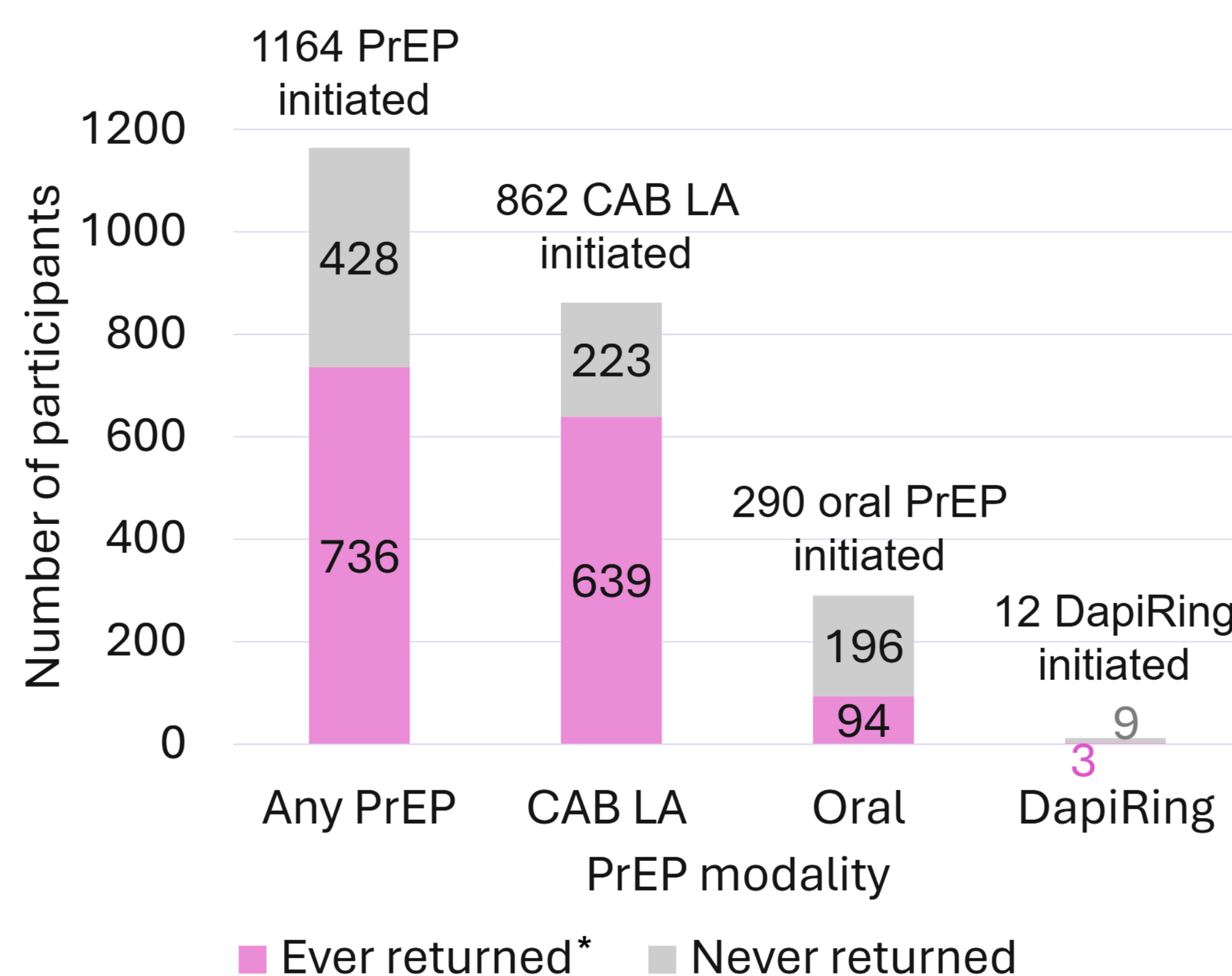
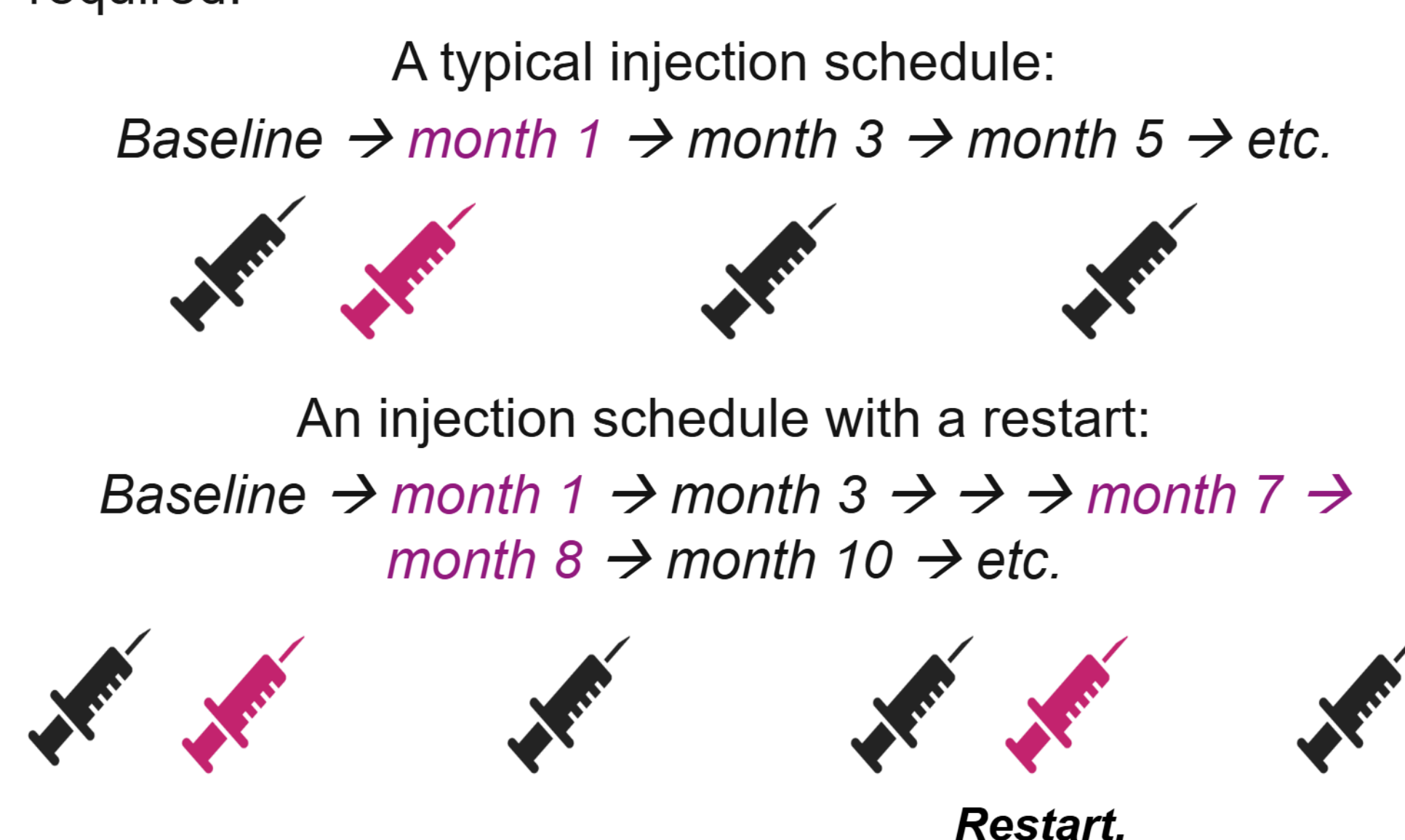


Figure 1: PrEPared to Choose participants that initiated on PrEP (overall and by modality) comparing the number that ever returned after the baseline visit (≥2 study visits attended) vs those that never returned after visit 1 (baseline).
*The interval of time to return (time from baseline to visit 1) varies by participant and ranges from 28 days to several months.

11% of CAB LA initiators that ever returned, returned >28 days from their scheduled visit and were required to restart the CAB-LA regimen.

CAB LA is a two monthly intramuscular PrEP injection. At initiation or restart an additional dose **after 1 month** is required.



CAB LA user characteristics associated with an increased probability of return:

CAB LA initiating participants were more likely to ever return if they had these characteristics compared to never returned CAB LA initiators:

- Age:** Older participants, >19 years were 50% more likely to ever return (OR 1.5, CI 1.09-2.30).
- PrEP experience:** Participants with prior PrEP experience (OR 2.4, CI 1.53-4.09) were more likely to ever return.
- Prior PrEP disclosure:** Participants that had disclosed their PrEP use (OR 2.59, CI 1.48-3.69) were more likely to ever return.
- Location of PrEP access:** Participants that accessed PrEP from the mobile clinic were 42% more likely to ever return (OR 1.42, CI 1.04-1.95).

Characteristics that did not influence the likelihood of return

- Sex:** male vs female (OR 1.12, CI 0.80-1.56)
- Employment status:** similar between those employed/ in education vs. unemployed (OR 1.03 CI 0.76-1.40).
- Reason for PrEP use:** as assessed during choice counselling (OR 0.86 CI 0.66-1.12)
- HIV risk perception:** risk score during HIV testing and counselling (OR 0.91 CI 0.71-1.16)
- Number of **sexual partners:** similar between those with ≤1 partner vs >1 partner (OR 0.83 CI 0.59-1.15)
- Sexually transmitted infection** diagnosis (*Chlamydia, Gonorrhoea, Syphilis*) (OR 1.40 CI 1.01-1.92)
- Mental health score:** Positive vs negative PHQ 4 score at baseline (OR 0.79 CI 0.43-1.38)
- Alcohol misuse:** Positive vs negative AUDIT score at baseline (OR 0.86 CI 0.68- 1.13)

Conclusion

Early results from PtC, a real-world, minimal retention implementation science trial, showed:

- Participants initiated on injectable PrEP were more likely to ever return compared to shorter acting agents (oral PrEP; DapiRing).
- Yet, a greater than expected portion of injectable PrEP users never returning after their initiation visit.
- Older, PrEP experienced CAB-LA users that accessed PrEP from community sites are more likely to return.



Acknowledgments

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- PrEPared to Choose lead: Carey Pike
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- The Desmond Tutu Health Foundation Youth Reference Group that advises PrEP implementation studies.

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