



## Opinion | **PrEP and the rising number of STIs – What is the connection between these two?**



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*The writer is a medical doctor working with HIV patients.*

In the last few decades, we have made tremendous progress in controlling the transmission of HIV, which is considered to be one of the primary sexually transmitted infections. The widespread use of preexposure prophylaxis (PrEP) has proven to be an effective method of preventing HIV transmission. However, there appears to be a drawback to this. We are facing a global pandemic of a growing number of other sexually transmitted infections. In this article, I am going to discuss the reasons behind this phenomenon as well as what needs to be done.

While working among STI patients over the last decade, I have noticed a change in sexually active individual's behavior. To begin with, there are more of these people than before, and they often have multiple sexual partners at the same time. I believe that the reason behind this is today's ease of meeting new people since a potential sexual partner can be found with a single swipe. Studies have shown that people who find their sexual partners through online dating sites also have a higher number of partners as well as a higher number of STIs. I still do not think that the number of sexual partners and STIs is something that goes fully hand in hand. The main thing I am worried about is the change in the behavior of sexually active people. It seems like people are not worried about STIs the same way they were before. This leads to unnecessary risk-taking, such as not using a condom.

What role does PrEP play in all of this? PrEP is described for people at risk of HIV infection. These are also people whose sexual behavior is often risky, exposing them to other STIs. Because of its history, HIV is seen as the boogeyman of sexually transmitted infections. There is no doubt that HIV is a dangerous infection, but many people forget that other STIs can be dangerous as well. Syphilis can cause hearing loss and even blindness. A gonorrhea infection may cause ectopic pregnancies and chronic pelvic pain.

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*“PrEP seems to give people a false sense of safety.”*

*- Dr. Pallidum*

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However, an increasing number of PrEP users report a decrease in condom use after starting the medication, leaving them vulnerable to these STIs. This makes me wonder; is PrEP really a blessing or a curse? It seems to give people a false sense of safety.

The connection between PrEP and the rising number of STIs is clear. Still, I believe we should not stop using PrEP, but rather sit down and discuss the importance of condom use with those who use PrEP. People with multiple sexual partners should also be tested regularly for STIs, even when using condoms. Due to the changing behaviors of people, advising and educating them is crucial for preventing this alarming situation from getting out of control.