

# Implementing PrEP in Switzerland: Evaluation of the first 4 years of the SwissPrEPared program



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## Background

Since the emergence of HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), health care systems have faced several challenges. PrEP users need to be linked to regular medical care, they often present with morbidities that might be uncovered during PrEP visits, and health care professionals (HCPs) need to be trained to counsel on PrEP use. The SwissPrEPared program started in April 2019 to meet these needs and has now expanded to 41 centers across Switzerland. It consists of four main parts: (1) an innovative web-platform that enables continuity of care for PrEP users across Switzerland by collecting client data to guide HCPs during consultation, (2) regular trainings of HCPs, (3) SwissPrEPared medical guidelines and, (4) low-threshold access to PrEP medication.

## Method:

Evaluation of the program was done annually by an anonymous online survey among HCPs asking for general and specific benefits of the program. Since 2022 an online survey was also sent to all participants who has been in the program for more than one year more than one year.

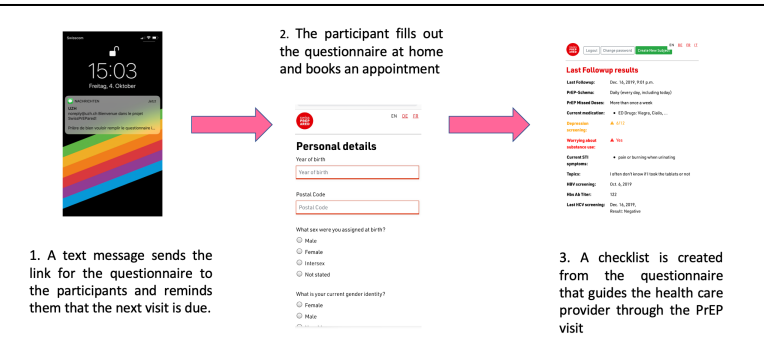


Figure 1: SwissPrEPared uses an online questionnaire to improve the quality of care and to collect data on PrEP implementation in Switzerland

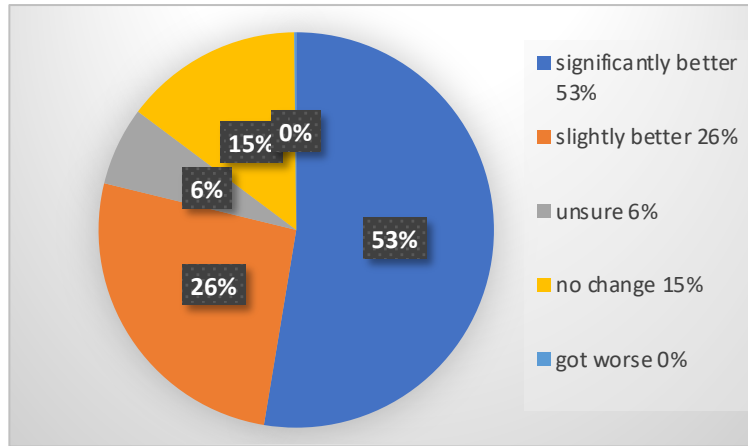


Figure 2: Result from the participant's survey: Do you think that the quality of medical care improved by participating in SwissPrEPared? n=1220

## Results:

By June 2023, 1220/2977 participants (41%) have filled-in the survey. 79% reported that the program has improved the quality of PrEP consultations; 99% were satisfied with their last visit. The number of HCPs evaluating the program increased from N= 33 in 2020 to N=66 in 2022, and the proportion of HCPs reporting that the consultation tool helped them to detect health risks that otherwise would have been missed increased from 71% in 2020 to 78% in 2022. Examples are early detection of mental health issues (46% in 2020 vs. 53% in 2022), or problematic substance use (50% vs. 54%). Table 1 shows the results of the HCP surveys.

Answer	Results 2020; N=33	Results 2022; N=44	Results 2022; N=66
Excluded (never used the tool)	5	3	5
1. How helpful is the SwissPrEPared online tool for your counseling in general?			
(1 point: not helpful, 5 points: very helpful)	Median: 3.8	Median: 3.7	Median: 3.8
2. With the help of the online tool/questionnaire, were you able to detect a particular health risk which otherwise you think you might have discovered too late or even missed? (you can choose more than one answer)			
No answer	0/28	0/41	3/61
Yes, Family history of osteoporosis	6/28 (21%)	8/41 (20%)	9/59 (15%)
Yes, depression	13/28 (46%)	24/41 (59%)	31/59 (53%)
Yes, problematic substance use	14/28 (50%)	19/41 (46%)	32/59 (54%)
Yes, side effects of PrEP	07/28 (25%)	5/41 (12%)	11/59 (19%)
Yes, adherence problems	08/28 (29%)	4/41 (10%)	11/59 (19%)
Yes, lack of vaccination	03/28 (11%)	8/41 (20%)	16/59 (16%)
Yes, other (free text)	01/28 (4%)	1/41 (2%)	1/59 (2%)
No	08/28 (29%)	10/41 (24%)	13/59 (22%)
3. What was in particular helpful for you, when using the SwissPrEPared tool? (you can choose more than one answer)			
No answer	1/28	3/41	3/61
It helps me not to forget important points of the consultation	16/27 (59%)	26/38 (68%)	31/58 (53%)
It saves time	7/27 (26%)	12/38 (32%)	17/58 (29%)
It helps to speak about uncomfortable topics	13/27 (48%)	19/38 (50%)	24/58 (41%)
It helps to keep an overview about the important topics	14/27 (52%)	21/38 (55%)	33/58 (57%)
Other points where the tool was helpful in your clinical routine	2/27 (7%)	1/38 (3%)	4/58 (7%)

Table 1: Health care professionals survey 2020-2023

## Conclusion

PrEP was implemented successfully in Switzerland with the help of the SwissPrEPared program. The program improved the quality of the medical care of the participants. The online consultation tool was helpful to structure the visits, to not forget important topics and it saved time. With the help of the tool, additional health issues could be addressed by the HCP during the visits, especially problematic substance use and mental health problems.