Background

• HIV continues to rise among key population in Latin America, especially younger gays, bisexuals and other men who have sex with men (MSM) aged 18-24 years (yMSM).

• The aim of this study was to compare yMSM characteristics with older MSM (>24 years), and to assess the factors associated with awareness and willingness to use daily oral PrEP by age group in Brazil, Mexico and Peru.

Methods

• MSM were recruited to complete an online survey via advertisements on Facebook, Grindr, and Hornet from March-May 2018.

• Eligible individuals were cisgender MSM, ≥18 years-old, HIV negative or of unknown status, lived in these countries, and provided informed consent.

• HIV-related risk was based on WHO recommendations for PrEP use: reporting unprotected sex, having an HIV+ sex partner, exchanging sex for money; or having an sexual transmitted infections (STI) all in the past 6 months. HIV risk perception was assessed with the question “In your opinion, what is your risk of getting HIV in the next year?”.

• We used chi-square to compare the characteristics of yMSM (18-24 years) with older MSM (>24 years).

• We used logistic regression modeling to calculate adjusted associations of awareness and willingness to use PrEP with younger age.

Results

• A total of 19,456 MSM completed the survey; 5,877 (30%) were yMSM. A higher proportion of yMSM was included in Peru compared to Brazil and Mexico (Figure 1).

• Compared to older MSM a higher proportion of yMSM were recruited on Facebook, were of low income, and had less years of schooling. Fewer yMSM self-reported being gay/homosexual, had steady partner and used apps for sex on a daily basis (Table 1).

• HIV risk perception, behavior, awareness and willingness to use daily oral PrEP according to age are depicted in Figure 2. More yMSM had never tested for HIV and reported low HIV risk perception. More yMSM reported condomless receptive anal sex, although a lower proportion of yMSM had high HIV-related risk and >5 male sexual partners.

• PrEP awareness was much lower among yMSM, while the difference between age groups for willingness to use PrEP was of smaller magnitude.

• In multivariable models adjusted by country, schooling, income, sexual orientation, steady partner, HIV-related and use of apps, younger age was associated with lower PrEP awareness (aOR=0.90 [95%CI: 0.84-0.97]).

• Younger age was not associated with willingness to use daily oral PrEP adjusting for the same variables (aOR=1.06 [95%CI: 0.98-1.14]), but the association becomes statistically significant after additionally adjusting for PrEP awareness (aOR=1.08 [95%CI: 1.00-1.17]).

Conclusions

• Younger MSM had different characteristics when compared to older MSM in Brazil, Mexico and Peru.

• yMSM at higher-risk of HIV infection are less aware of PrEP. Interventions to increase awareness and willingness to use PrEP among yMSM are paramount.