

Findings from **Bexsero**: Evaluation of Attitudes, Challenges and Opportunities for N. gonorrhoeae prevention (BEACON)

What was the study about?

Our study explored what gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men, as well as healthcare professionals in sexual health, think about using the 4CMenB (Bexsero) vaccine to help prevent gonorrhoea. We wanted to understand how people feel about getting the vaccine, what might encourage people to get it, and what concerns or obstacles they might face.

Why is this important?

Gonorrhoea rates are rising, and some strains are becoming harder to treat. The UK has recently recommended offering Bexsero to people who are more likely to get gonorrhoea, mainly gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men, to help reduce gonorrhoea infections. But for Bexsero to work, people need to be willing and able to get it. Understanding attitudes and real-world challenges is essential for designing services that people can and will use.

What did we do?

We held group discussions with:

- 17 gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men from England who were at higher risk of bacterial STIs
- 5 healthcare professionals

Participants discussed their views on the Bexsero, their motivations or concerns, and what could help or prevent access. We looked for common themes across personal, community, and system levels to better understand what affects willingness to get the vaccine and what changes are needed to support successful use in UK.

Key findings

- Both gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men and healthcare professionals were positive about using Bexsero for gonorrhoea prevention.
- Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men liked the idea of reducing anxiety about gonorrhoea and supporting their overall sexual wellbeing. They saw Bexsero as fitting easily alongside existing tools for preventing sexually transmitted infections, such as HIV prevention medication (often called PrEP).
- It's thought that two doses of Bexsero can prevent between 30 and 35% of gonorrhoea infections. This was seen to be modest but acceptable by gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men. While 30-35% protection wasn't a deal-breaker, it might make people less likely to actively seek the vaccine unless it was easy to get.
- Difficulty getting appointments at sexual health clinics was seen as a barrier to using Bexsero.
- Participants wanted options other than sexual health clinics, such pop-up or outreach services to help make access easier and fairer.
- Healthcare professionals wanted clear guidance and training on Bexsero and stressed that services would need proper funding.

 What do these findings mean?

Bexsero is acceptable and appealing to the people most likely to benefit from it. But successful rollout depends on making two doses of the vaccine easy to get, communicating clearly, and ensuring sexual health clinics have the resources to deliver it. Community-based approaches, rather than relying only on busy clinics, may be helpful to ensure everyone who wants the vaccine can access it.