

# “WHAT THE %\*^! IS PREP?”: WHAT SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT WITH MTV SHUGA REVEALS ABOUT KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES TO PREP

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## BACKGROUND

MTV Shuga, created by the MTV Staying Alive Foundation, is a popular “edutainment” TV drama. It’s designed to equip young people with the knowledge and resources to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health. Recent series have aimed to increase awareness of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV.

## AIM

To examine viewers’ knowledge and attitudes about PrEP, as they engage with the show via social media.

## METHODS

We extracted 2,296 YouTube comments from ‘MTV Shuga: Down South’ episodes featuring PrEP storylines. We included comments that were posted between February 2019 and July 2020. Posts were downloaded and transcripts analyzed using an inductive thematic approach. Demographic data were collected using YouTube analytics



## FINDINGS

Some viewer learnt about PrEP for the first time, from MTV Shuga

Kthiggem Jackson 1 year ago  
 What the hell is **prep** i never heard of it

Others willingly shared their knowledge with online peers

John Gatheru Prep has some side effects on the first time use but once your body is used to it your fine.

Viewers used social media to share questions and concerns about PrEP

Jj Kalinga Does prep alter your body functions?

MTV Shuga @Jj Kalinga No it doesn't fam, there will be some side effects in the beginning, but not body-altering. Check out the articles on our website to find out more. Search "PrEP"

Social media allowed MTV Shuga staff to correct false comments about PrEP

Aisha Sani 1 year ago  
 I am not sure if **prep** is safe, as seven people have contacted hiv while using **PrEP**. the latest victim contacted it today.

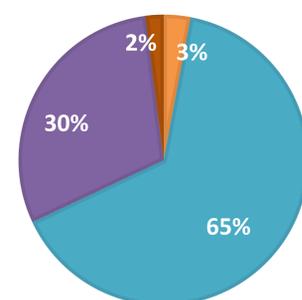
MTV Shuga 1 year ago  
 The percentage of people who contracted Prep despite correct usage is very small. To quote PrEP researcher Robert Grant of UCSF "HIV infections during PrEP use are extremely rare. There are only a few cases reported worldwide after hundreds of thousands of people have used PrEP and tens of thousands of HIV ...

## Viewer Demographics

Geography	Views
<input type="checkbox"/> Total	2,566,938
<input type="checkbox"/> South Africa	459,433 17.9%
<input type="checkbox"/> Nigeria	257,302 10.0%
<input type="checkbox"/> Kenya	249,562 9.7%
<input type="checkbox"/> United States	207,439 8.1%
<input type="checkbox"/> United Kingdom	131,797 5.1%
<input type="checkbox"/> Ghana	114,540 4.5%

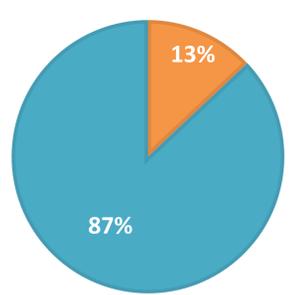
### AGE DISTRIBUTION

13-17 Years Old 18-24 Years Old  
 25-44 Years Old 45-54 Years Old



### GENDER

Male Female



## CONCLUSION

MTV Shuga reaches a wide audience, especially young women in sub-Saharan Africa – a group at disproportionate risk for HIV acquisition. Recent series have raised audience members’ interest and awareness of PrEP on social media. Viewers’ comments reflected mixed levels of knowledge about PrEP. Social media was a useful tool for correcting misinformation, answering questions, reinforcing accurate messages around PrEP and disseminating additional resources. The analysis revealed both support and resistance to PrEP, offering insights to improve PrEP acceptability and uptake among young people.



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