



# Preparing for the impact of PrEP and the diversification of gay men's sex practices in WA: insights from local and national behavioural data

Never Stand Still

Arts & Social Sciences

Centre for Social Research in Health

Martin Holt  
[m.holt@unsw.edu.au](mailto:m.holt@unsw.edu.au)  
@martinholt

# PrEP in Australia: some history

- PrEP initially shown to be effective in 2010 (Grant et al, 2010)
- Multiple studies have found >90% effectiveness in preventing HIV acquisition, particularly for gay and bisexual men, if users are adherent (Fonner et al, 2016)
- Debate began in Australia in 2011 about how to introduce PrEP
- In the absence of access, some GBM began personally importing
- Small demo projects 'over East' in 2014-15, followed by larger studies in 2016 e.g. EPIC-NSW, PrEPX, QPrEPD
- PrEPIT-WA opened in late 2017 (>700 enrolled)
- PBS listing of PrEP in April 2018



# Now PrEP is here, what should we expect?

- Experience in eastern States shows introducing PrEP ‘at scale’ with GBM has had a variety of effects:
  - demand on health systems/services
  - engaging GBM at risk of HIV
  - prevention of HIV among users
  - increased STI diagnoses among users
  - rapidly changing norms and sexual behaviour among GBM
  - debate about who has been missed in early rollout
- PrEP roll out is experimental, and its effects (good and bad) will depend on local epidemic context ([Holt & Murphy, 2017](#))



## Gay Community Periodic Survey: Perth 2017



Evlyn Lee<sup>1</sup>  
Linn Mao<sup>2</sup>  
Toby Lea<sup>3</sup>  
Matt Bacon<sup>4</sup>  
David Korhonen<sup>5</sup>  
Lisa Bastian<sup>6</sup>  
Roanna Lobo<sup>7</sup>  
Garrett Prestage<sup>8</sup>  
Martin Holt<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Centre for Social Research in Health  
<sup>2</sup> Western Australian AIDS Council  
<sup>3</sup> Department of Health, Western Australia  
<sup>4</sup> School of Public Health, Curtin University  
<sup>5</sup> The Kirby Institute

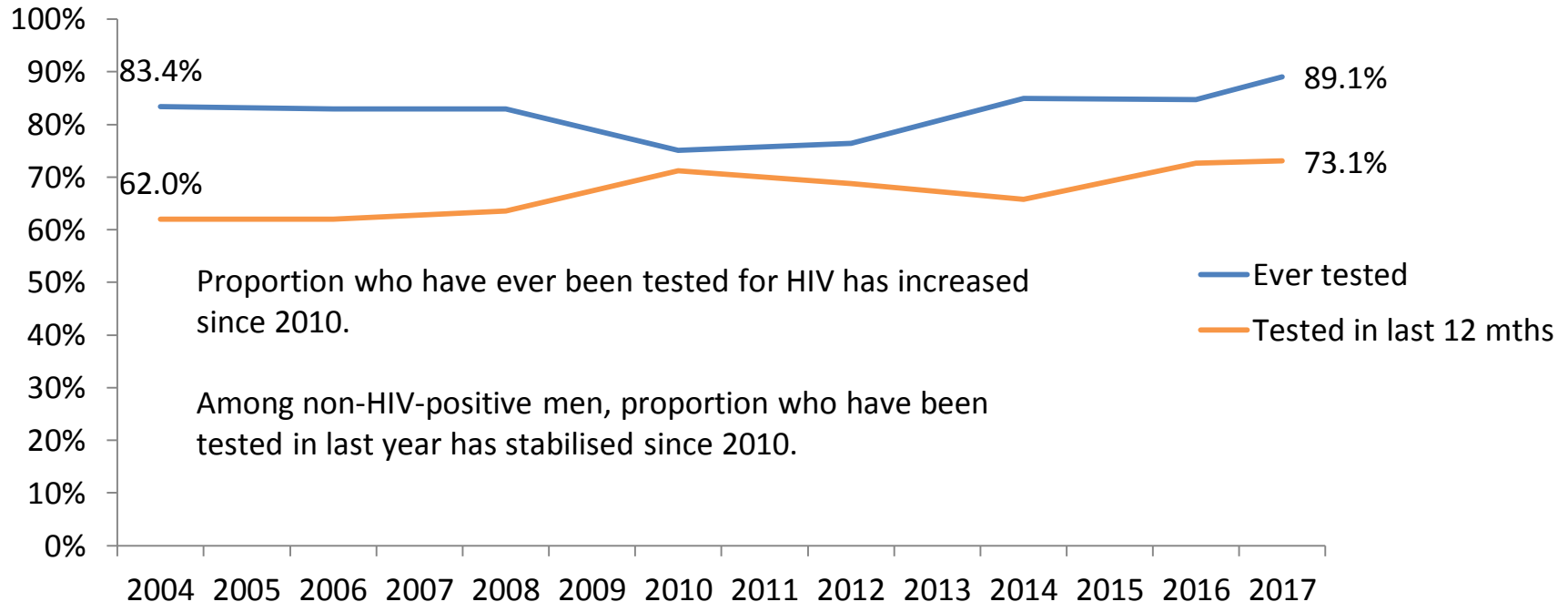


## Changing attitudes to and engagement with biomedical HIV prevention by gay and bisexual men: key findings from the PrEPARE Project 2017



Toby Lea, Johan Kolstee, Dean Murphy, Jeanne Ellard, Heather-Marie Schmidt,  
David Crawford, John de Wit, Martin Holt

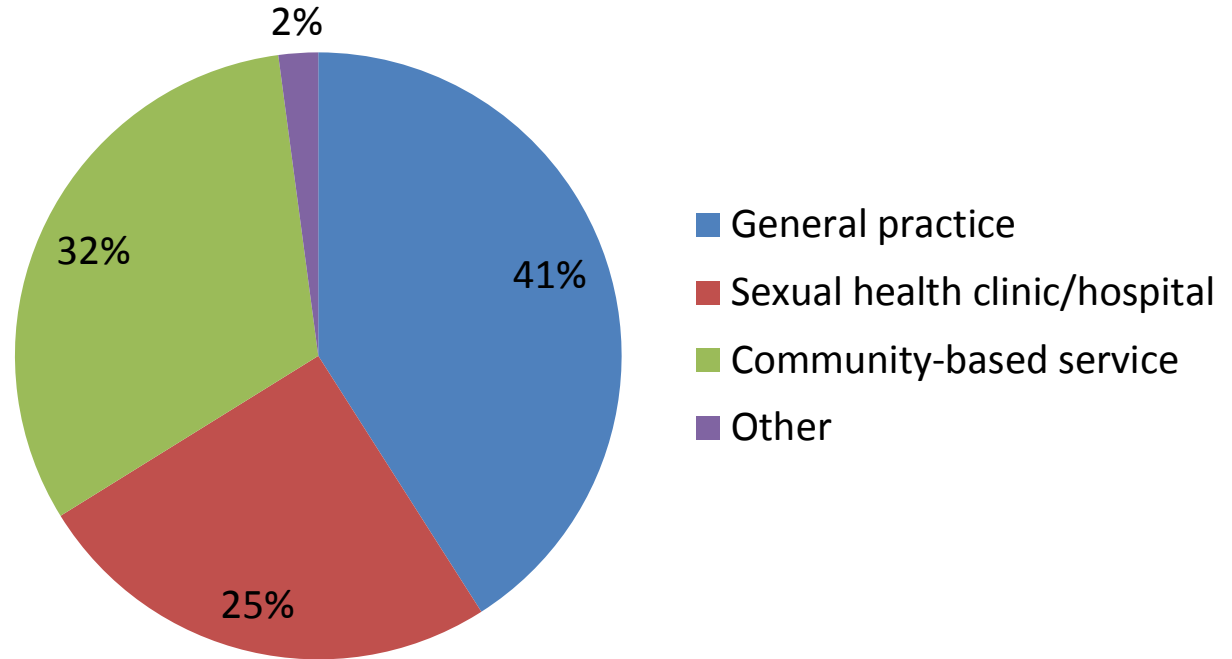
# HIV testing (Perth GCPS)



Source: [Perth Gay Community Periodic Survey](#), CSRH

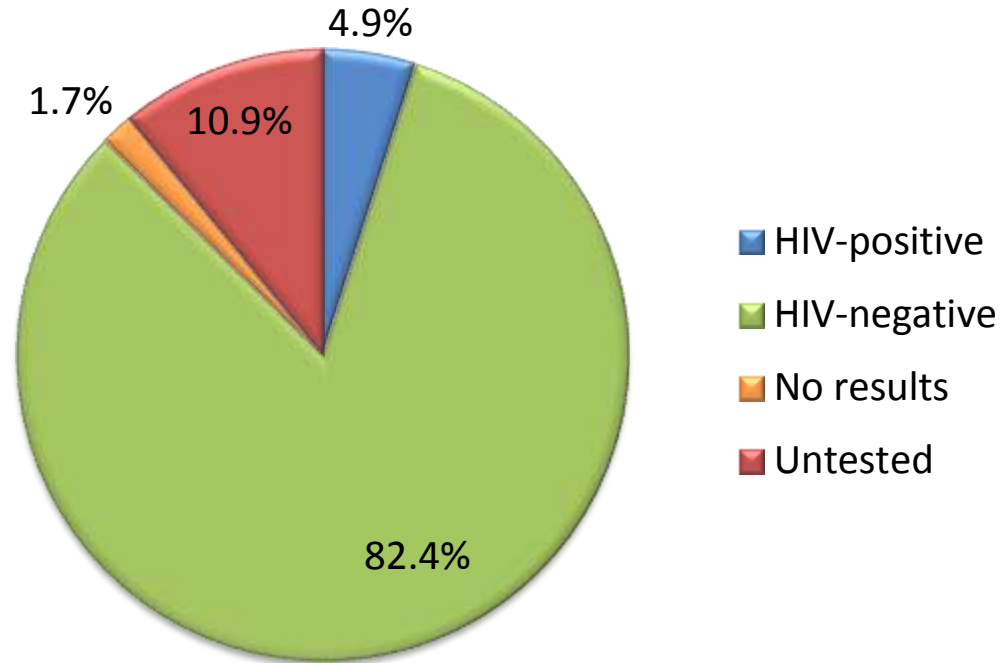
# Place of last HIV test (Perth GCPS 2017)

Community-based services (i.e. M Clinic) have become more popular over time.



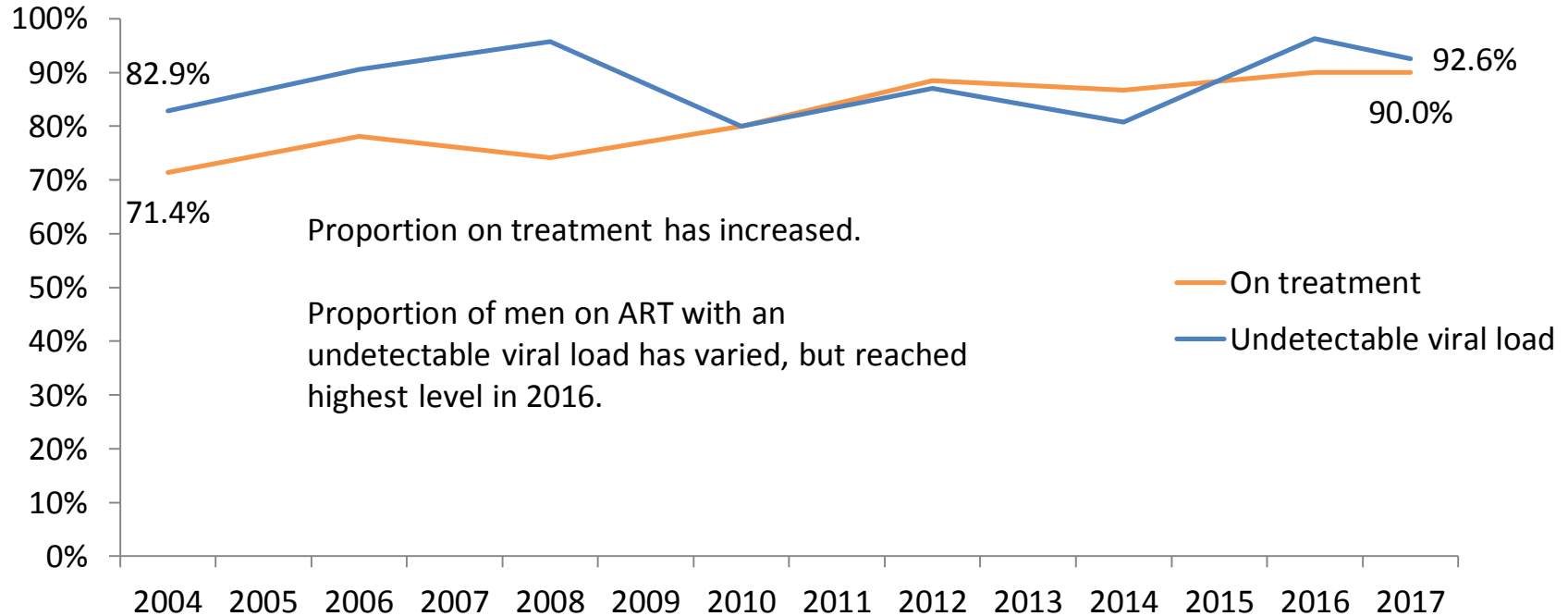
Source: [Perth Gay Community Periodic Survey](#), CSRH

# HIV status (Perth GCPS 2017)



Source: [Perth Gay Community Periodic Survey](#), CSRH

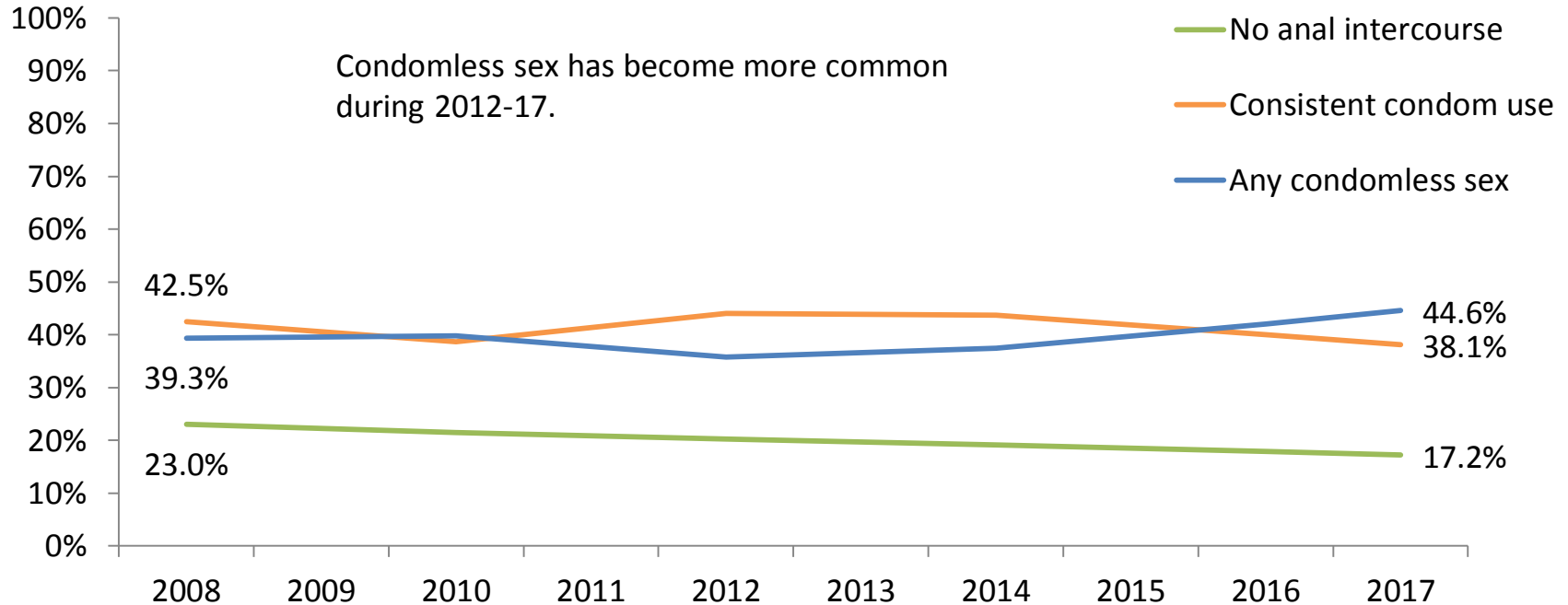
# HIV-positive men (Perth GCPS)



Source: [Perth Gay Community Periodic Survey](#), CSRH

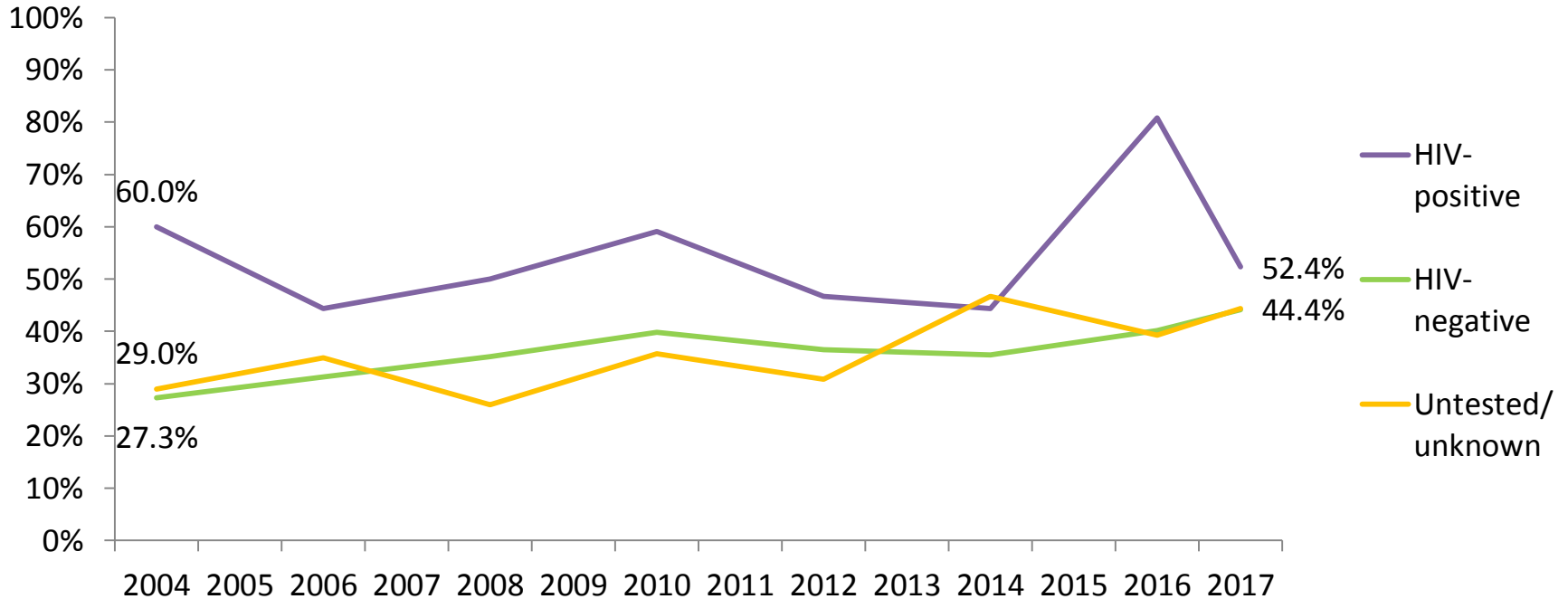


# Sex with casual male partners (last 6 mths)



Source: [Perth Gay Community Periodic Survey](#), CSRH

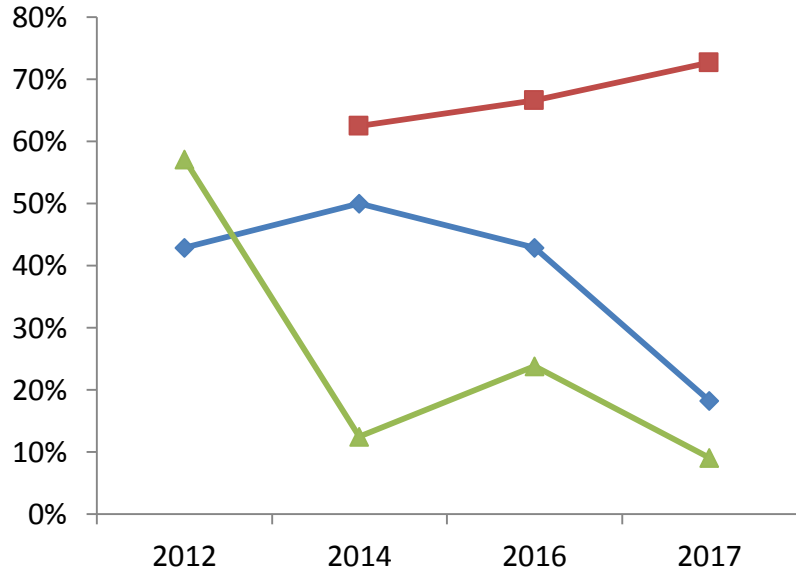
# CAIC by HIV status (Perth GCPS)



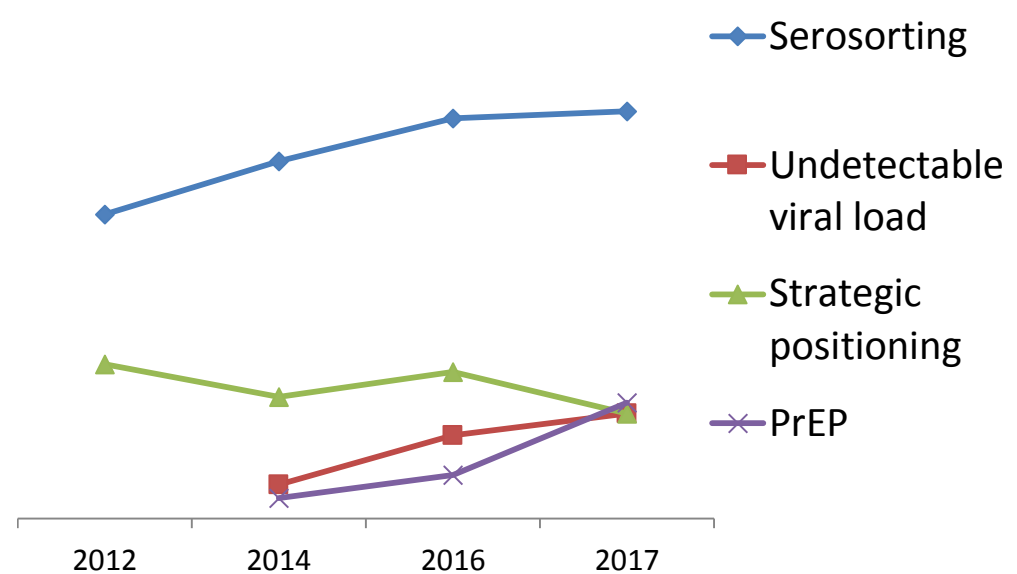
Source: [Perth Gay Community Periodic Survey](#), CSRH; CAIC = condomless anal intercourse with casual partners

# Frequently used risk reduction strategies during CAIC

## HIV-positive men

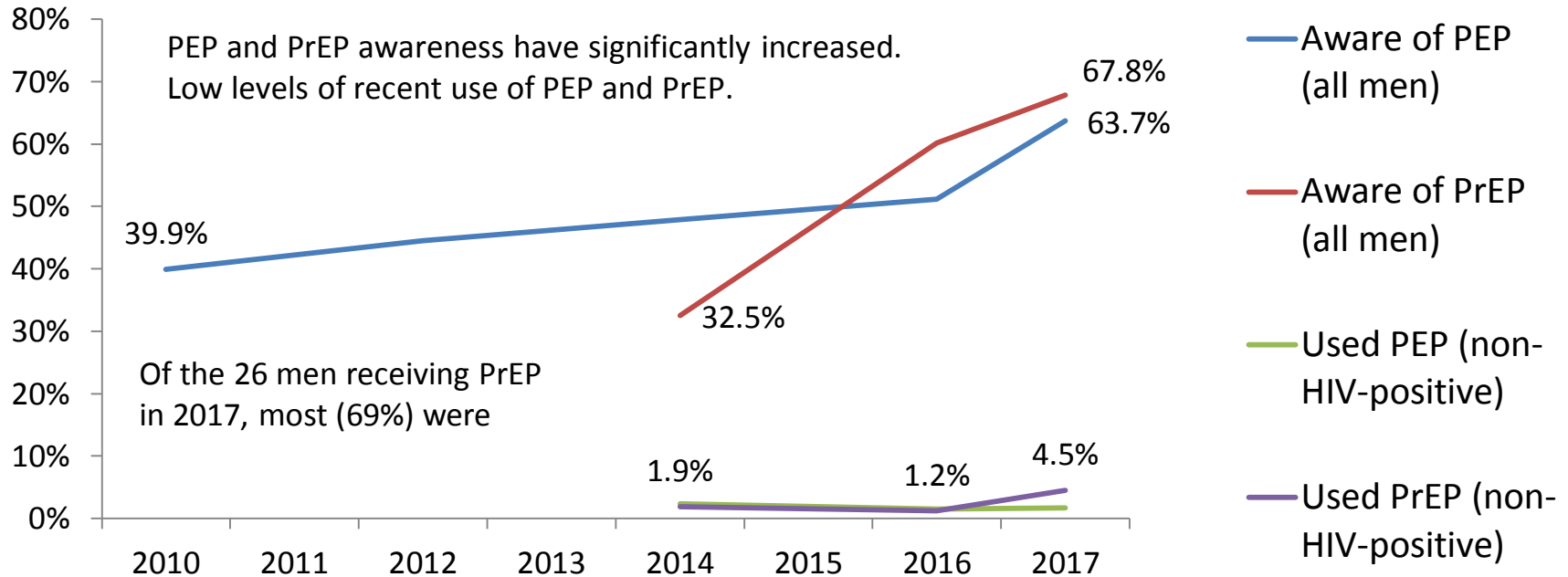


## HIV-negative men



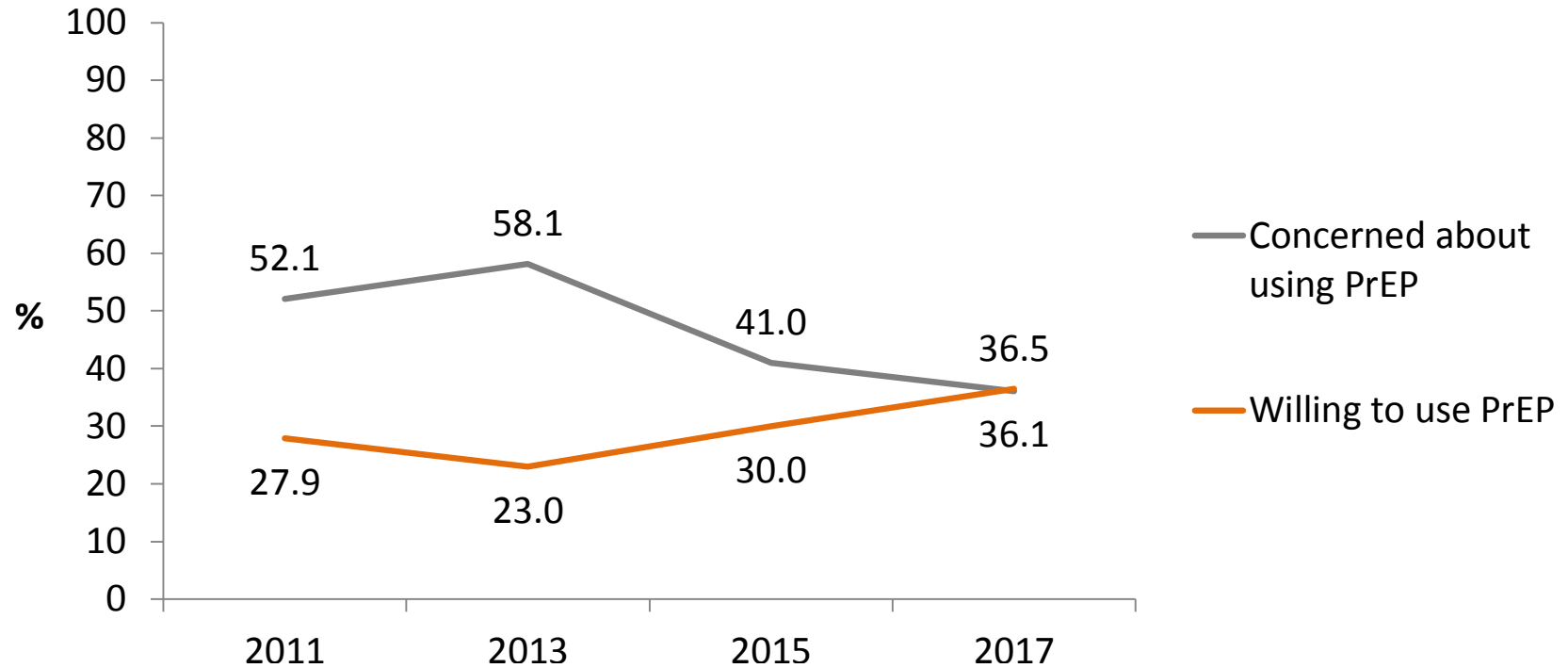
Source: [Perth Gay Community Periodic Survey](#), CSRH; CAIC = condomless anal intercourse with casual partners

# Post- and pre-exposure prophylaxis (Perth GCPS)

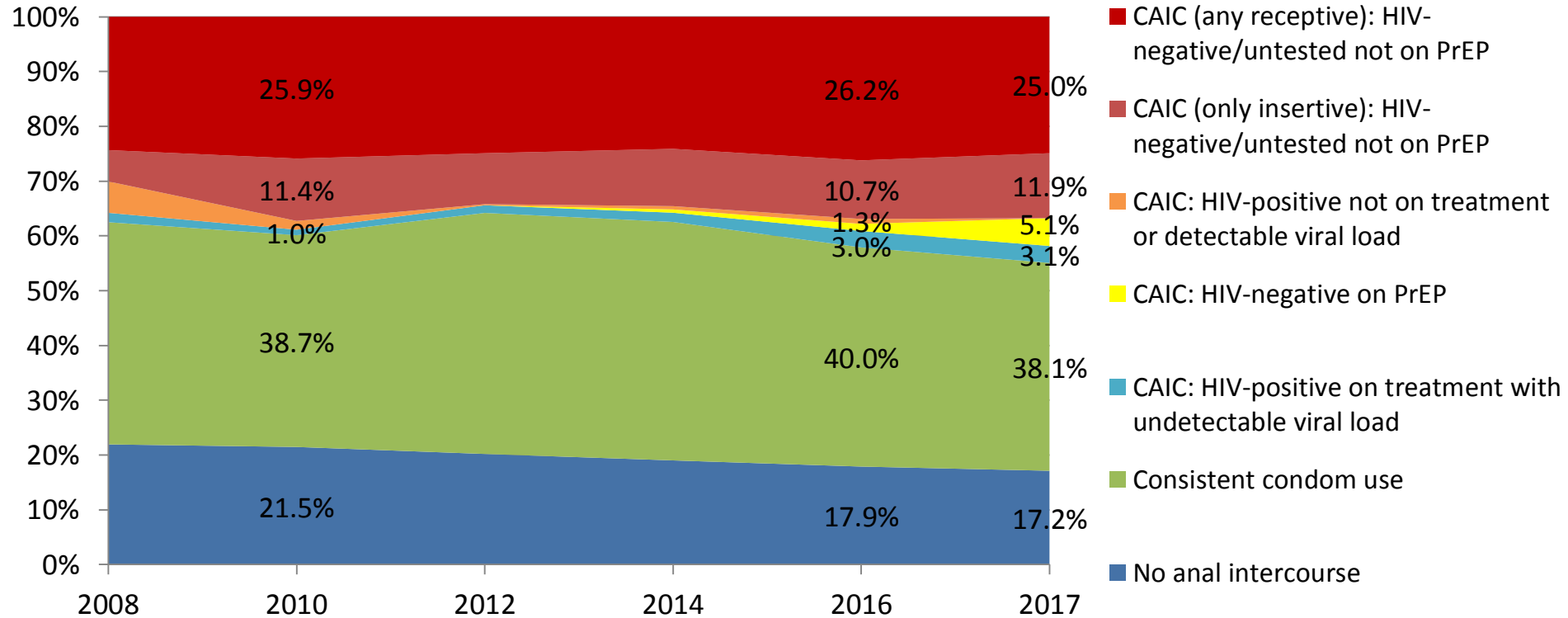


Source: [Perth Gay Community Periodic Survey](#), CSRH

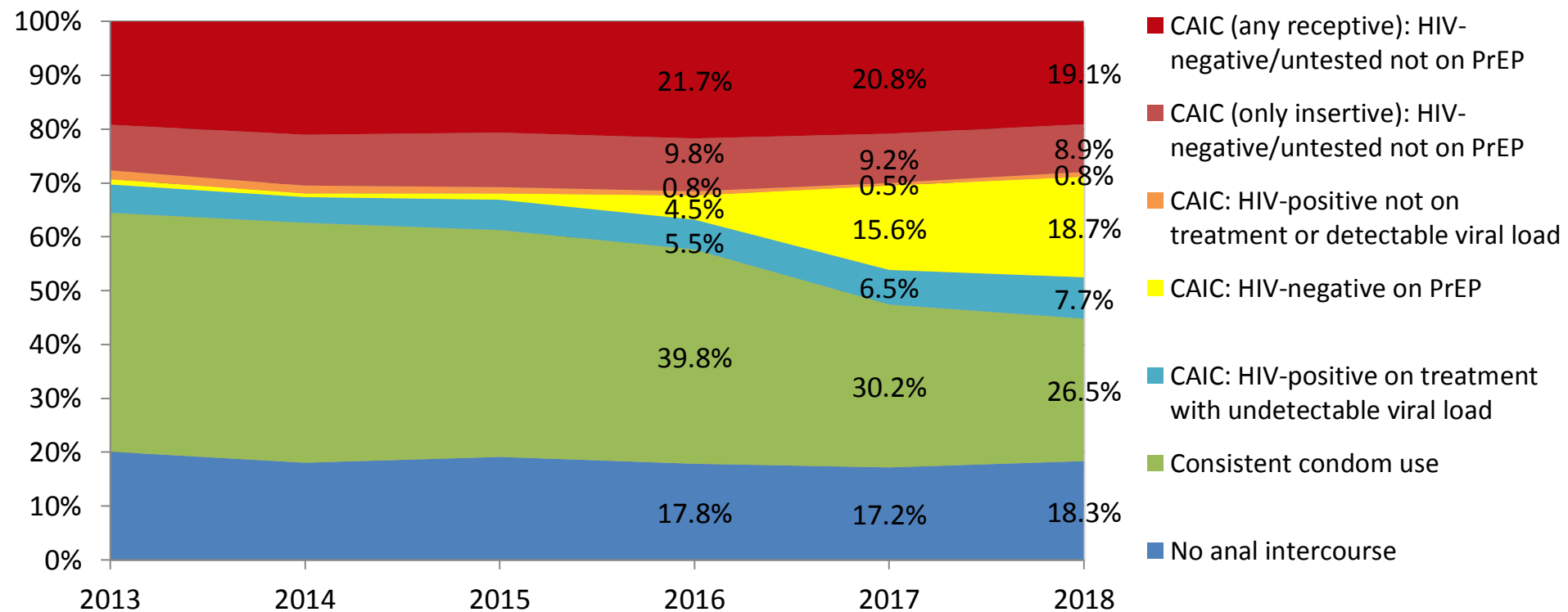
# Attitudes to PrEP (PrEPARE, national data)



# The beginning of PrEP uptake in Perth



# What has happened elsewhere? (GCPS)



# Summary

- PrEP is being introduced to GBM in Perth against a backdrop of:
  - High levels of HIV testing
  - HIV prevalence of ~5%
  - High levels of treatment and viral suppression among HIV-positive men
  - Gradually increasing condomless sex between casual partners
  - HIV-positive men increasingly relying on undetectable viral load
  - HIV-negative men relying on serosorting for condomless sex
  - Increasing awareness of and willingness to use PrEP
- 2017 data from Perth GCPS show low uptake (<5%) & impact of PrEP, before PrEPIT-WA and PBS listing
- National GCPS data suggests large-scale PrEP uptake is likely to disrupt condom use



# Questions & considerations

- It remains unclear whether declining condom use will impede population impact of PrEP (Holt et al, in press)
- If sustaining condom use is important, it remains unclear how to maintain it among GBM who don't use PrEP
- Lower levels of condom use and higher levels of testing = more STI diagnoses and treatment
- Survey (& qualitative) data suggest rapid changes in experiences of GBM negotiating sex due to PrEP (good and not so good)
- Encouraging effective and supportive negotiation while new norms are being established is likely to be critical to long-term success.

# Acknowledgments

- All the gay and bisexual men who participated
- WAAC: Matt Bacon, Matt Creamer, Andrew Burry, David Kernohan and the team of GCPS peer recruiters
- WA Department of Health: Sue Laing, Lisa Bastian
- Curtin University: Roanna Lobo
- CSRH: Evelyn Lee, Toby Lea, Dean Murphy, Limin Mao, John de Wit
- Kirby Institute: Iryna Zablotska, Garrett Prestage
- CSRH, the GCPS and PrEPARE are supported by the Australian Government Department of Health