Mpxox vaccine uptake in transgender people and gay, bisexual and other MSM clients of the provincial STI clinic

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Context

• BC launched a first dose Mpxox vaccination campaign in July 2022 promoted to transgender people and gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (T/GBM)
• Health authorities partnered with T/GBM providers to implement the campaign
• We measured vaccine uptake and associated factors six weeks following campaign launch

Methods

• From Aug 6-22 we invited BCCDC STI clinic clients from the past 3 years to an online survey
• The survey included questions about vaccine eligibility, uptake and factors that may be associated with these outcomes, with a $200 prize draw
• We used bivariate analyses to look at factors associated with vaccine uptake among eligible T/GBM

In our sample of 331 T/GBM clinic clients: 66% who were eligible for the Mpxox vaccine had been vaccinated with a first dose

If unvaccinated, 85% were willing to receive the vaccine

Being eligible but unvaccinated was associated with:
• Identifying as bisexual or heteroflexible (mostly straight)
• Spending less time with other T/GBM
• Having < 2 sexual partners or not attending venues for sex
• Not aware most cases of Mpxox in MSM or about symptoms
• Lower perceived susceptibility to Mpxox
• Increased constraints to vaccine access
• Fewer cues to action (e.g., knowing someone who has received vaccine, seeing information promoting vaccine, vaccine recommended by others)

Many reported challenges to accessing the vaccine:
• 40% related to physical access to clinics (e.g., opening hours, distance)
• 22% related to privacy or stigma (e.g., concerns about being judged)

Implications for practice

• Uptake of the first dose of Mpxox vaccine was high in this Lower Mainland health-seeking population of T/GBM (may be higher than in other BC settings)
• Uptake was lower among T/GBM who may be more difficult to engage by the promotional channels available
• Intentional and ongoing engagement of diverse groups of T/GBM is key in Mpxox and other targeted vaccine programs to this population

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