

**Are people less likely to
use condoms if they're on
PrEP?**

**How does confidence in
HIV treatments affect
condom use?**

Hart, T.A., Palma, P.A., Deng, Y. et al.
Disentangling Between- and Within-Person
Effects of HIV PrEP and Treatment Attitudes
on Condom Use and Bacterial STIs Among
Sexual Minority Men. *AIDS Behav* (2026).
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-026-05301-4>



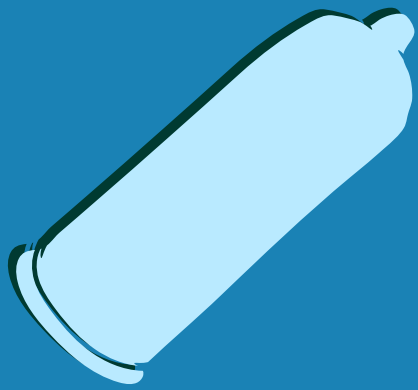


HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (**PrEP**) can reduce the chances of getting HIV by up to 99%.

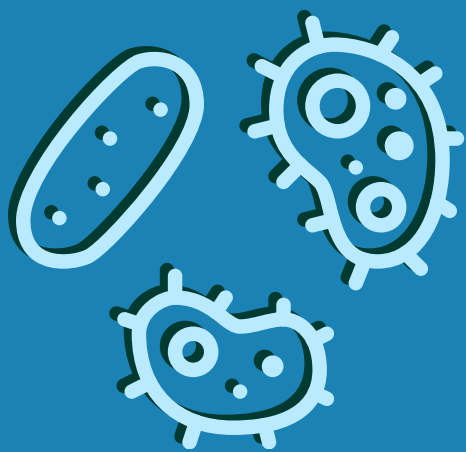


For people living with HIV, antiretroviral therapies can lead to HIV becoming **undetectable** in their blood, which means it is **untransmittable** to others.

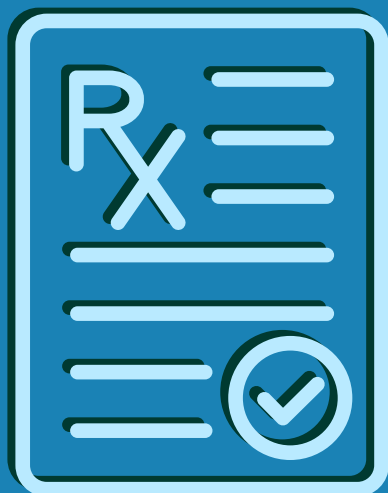




Condom use is declining among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (**GBM**) in recent years.



At the same time, the rates of STIs has been increasing across all groups, with GBM disproportionately affected.



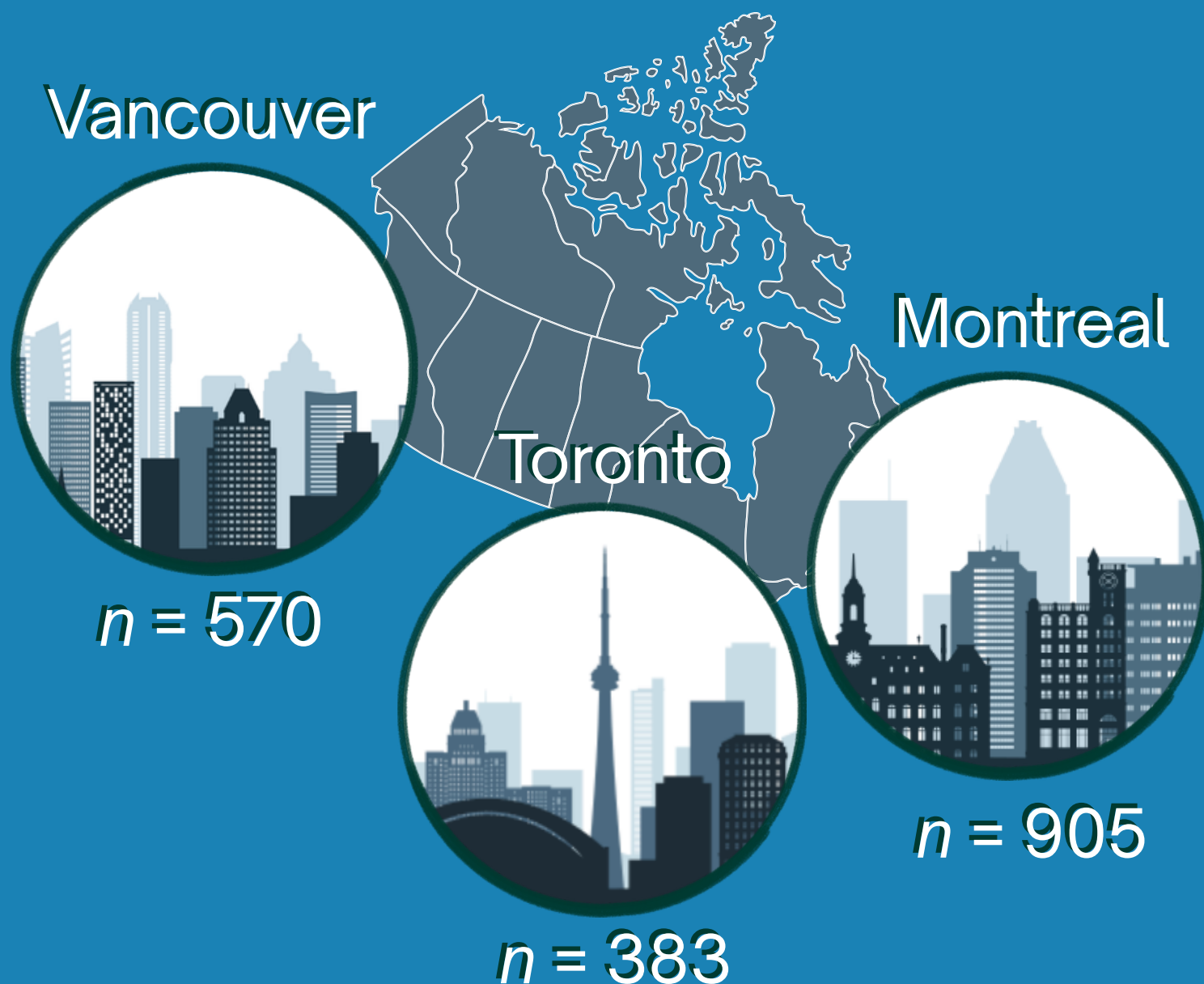
Concerns that this change in behavior may be because of uptake in HIV PrEP.



Using data from the Engage Cohort Study,
we looked at how changes in...

- PrEP use
- Confidence in HIV treatment in preventing transmission

...affect condom use and STI outcomes
among GBM who are not living with HIV.



We followed participants over four years



- 12-month follow-ups for first two years
- 6-month follow-ups after

Where they completed a survey at each visit



- Beliefs about HIV treatment and transmission
- PrEP use and condom use in the past 6 months

And provided samples for STI testing



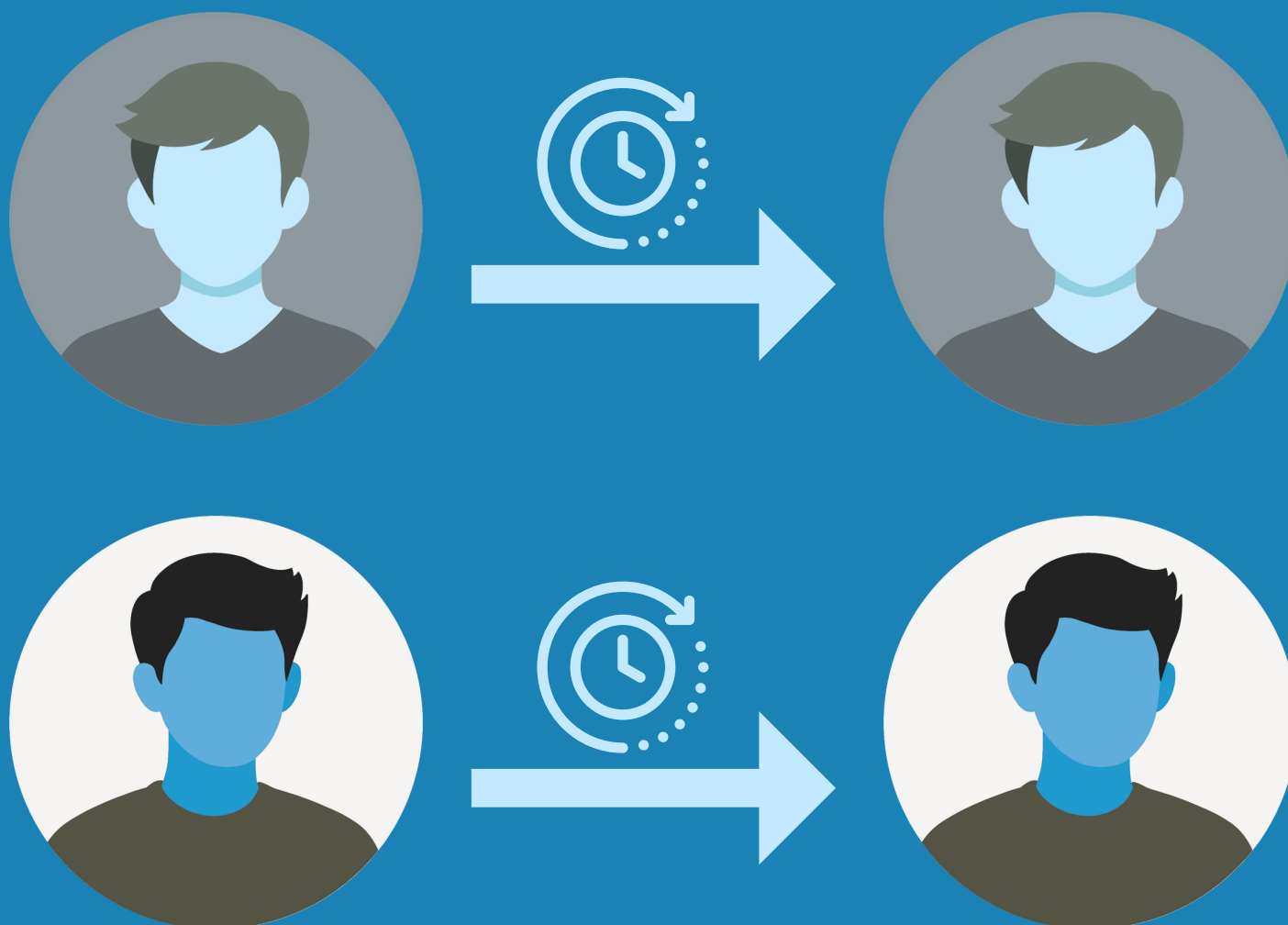
- Urine tests
- Oral and anal swabs



We looked at differences between participants



And changes within the same person across multiple visits



Between participants, who was more likely to engage in condomless anal sex?

- GBM on PrEP
- GBM who were more confident in HIV treatments preventing transmission

How did this affect sexual health?

- Differences in condom use (mostly) accounted for differences in STI diagnoses for people on PrEP.
- Condom use completely accounted for differences in STI outcomes for HIV treatment attitudes.

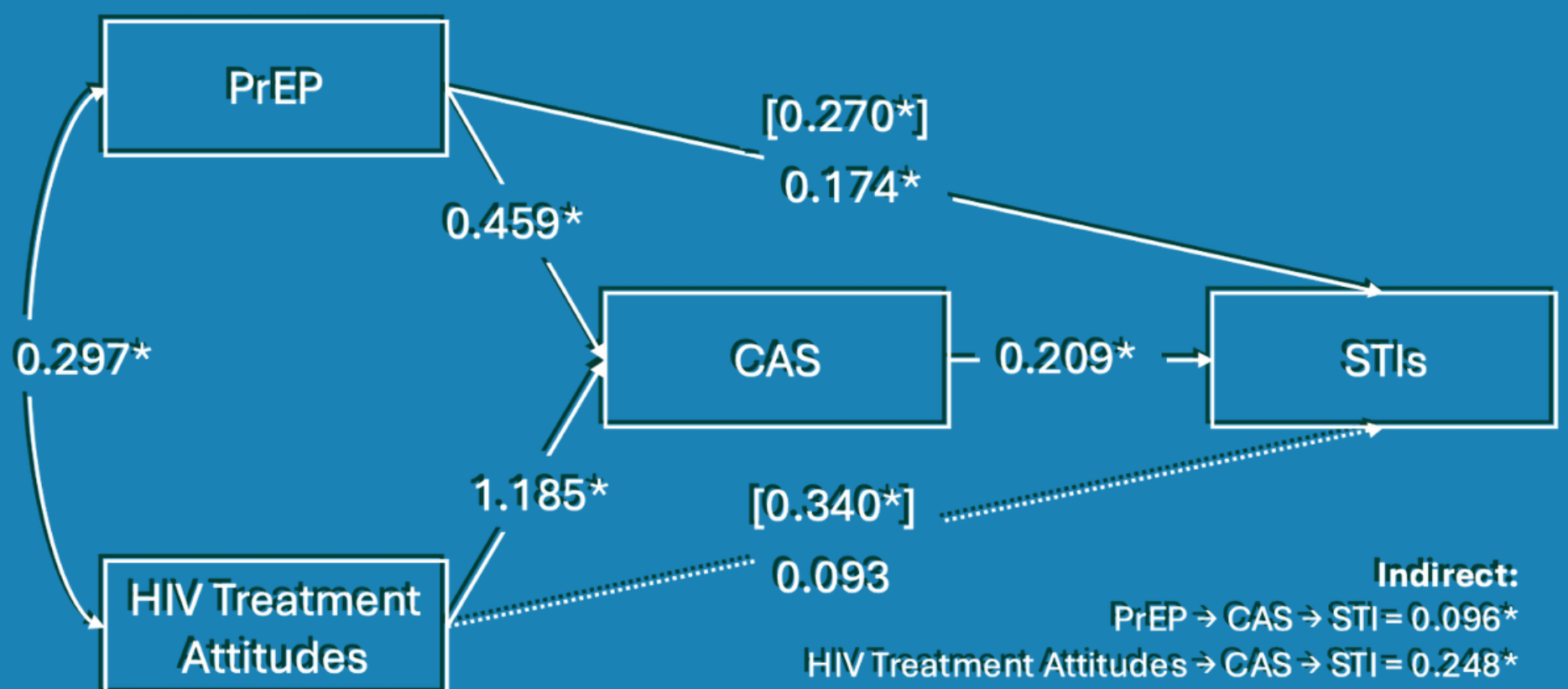


Figure 1. Between-participant associations in PrEP use and HIV treatment attitudes on condomless anal sex (CAS) and STI diagnoses



Within participants, how did going on PrEP affect condomless anal sex and sexual health?

- Going on PrEP was associated with more condomless anal sex and higher rates of STIs, but condom use didn't account for these differences.

How did becoming more confident in HIV treatments affect these outcomes?

- Becoming more confident was associated with less condomless anal sex and lower rates of STI diagnoses across visits.

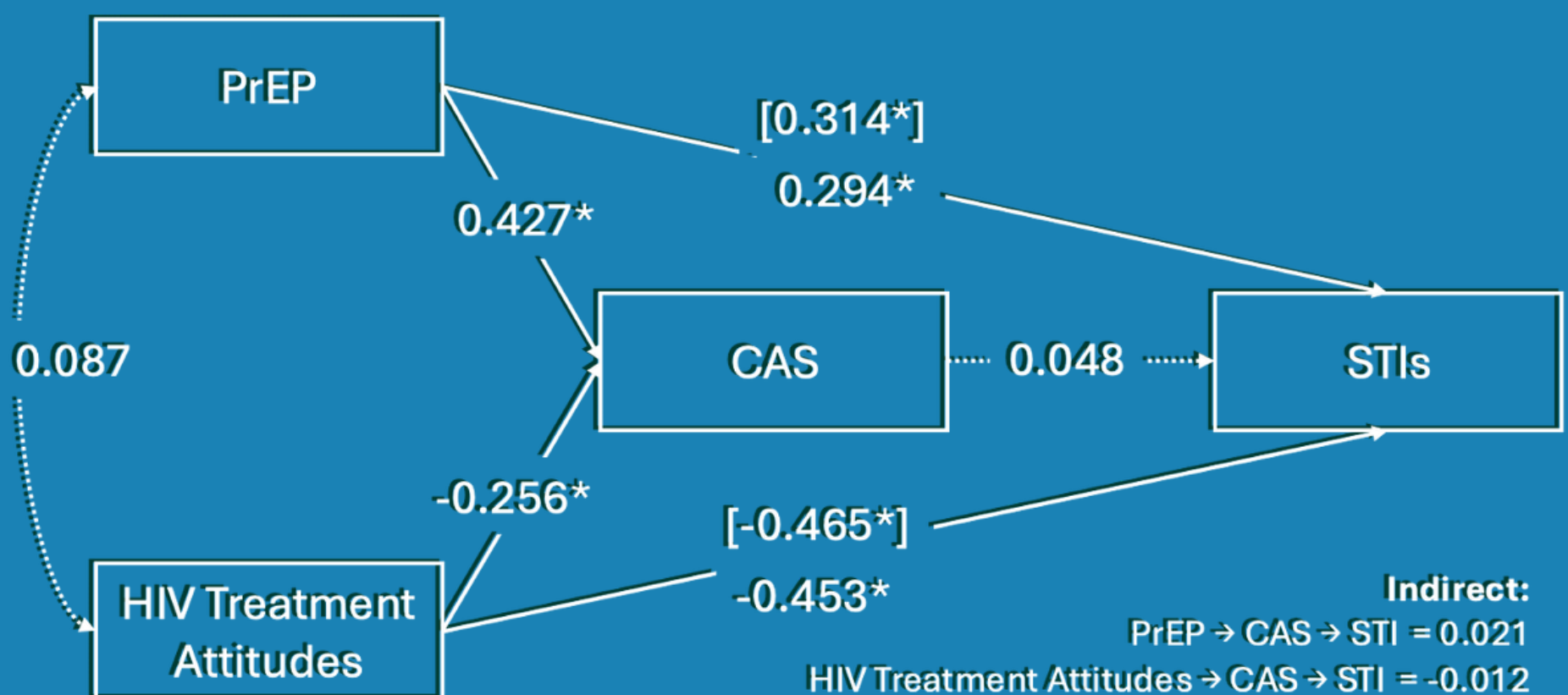


Figure 2. Within-participant associations in PrEP use and HIV treatment attitudes on condomless anal sex (CAS) and STI diagnoses



These findings suggest that it might be important to talk with GBM going on PrEP about STIs, and strategies they can adopt to minimize its impact on their lives.

In addition to promoting biomedical interventions, like doxy, our findings suggest that greater knowledge about sexual health may also be helpful.



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