



Awareness of PEP, PrEP and U=U in a high-risk urban population

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Spectra

A West London based charity that:

- Works to improve the choices, health and well-being of people often from diverse and marginalised communities. Empowering positive, informed choices about health, including sexual health, emotional resilience and wellbeing, and working with you to combat isolation and risk.
- Aims for knowledgeable, aware and empowered individuals and communities who have clear, accurate, credible and non-judgemental wellbeing and health information and quality services that are relevant and accessible.
- Provides outreach, HIV testing, STI sampling, counselling, 1-2-1 support and group work.
- Works with LGBTQ, BME communities and young people.

<http://spectra-london.org.uk/>



Background

- Public awareness of HIV-prevention strategies is key in the fight to end HIV
- PrEP and PEP awareness remain low in high-risk groups ^{1,2}
- There are racial and ethnic disparities in awareness and knowledge of both PrEP and PEP ³
- There is high variability in the perceived accuracy of the U=U message ⁴

Aims

- To assess awareness of PEP, PrEP and U=U in a high-risk population in the UK
- To determine factors affecting awareness

Methods

- July 2017 - November 2018
- Retrospective observational study
- 2,570 clients were given a voluntary questionnaire as part of the registration process for HIV testing
- They were tested in community venues across London as part of Spectra's services

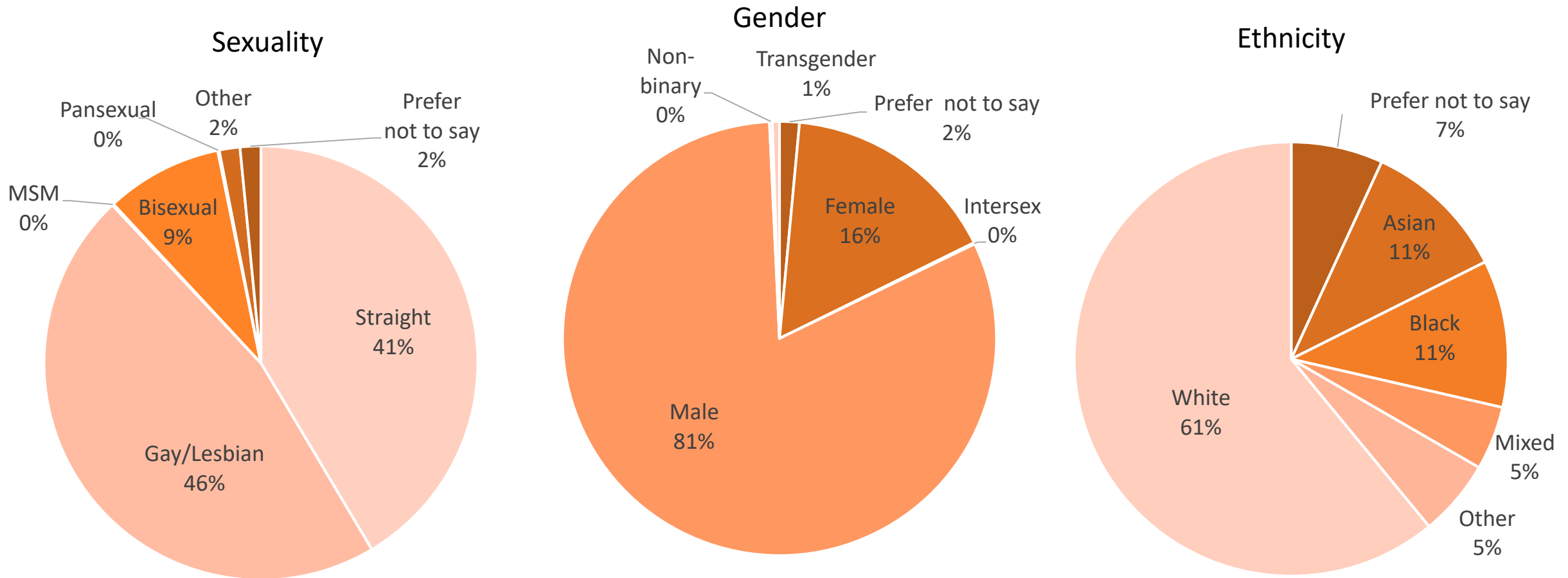
Methods

- Sexual history data was collected
- Point of care HIV test administered
- Demographic data collected as part of registration process
- Awareness compared between groups using chi-squared tests

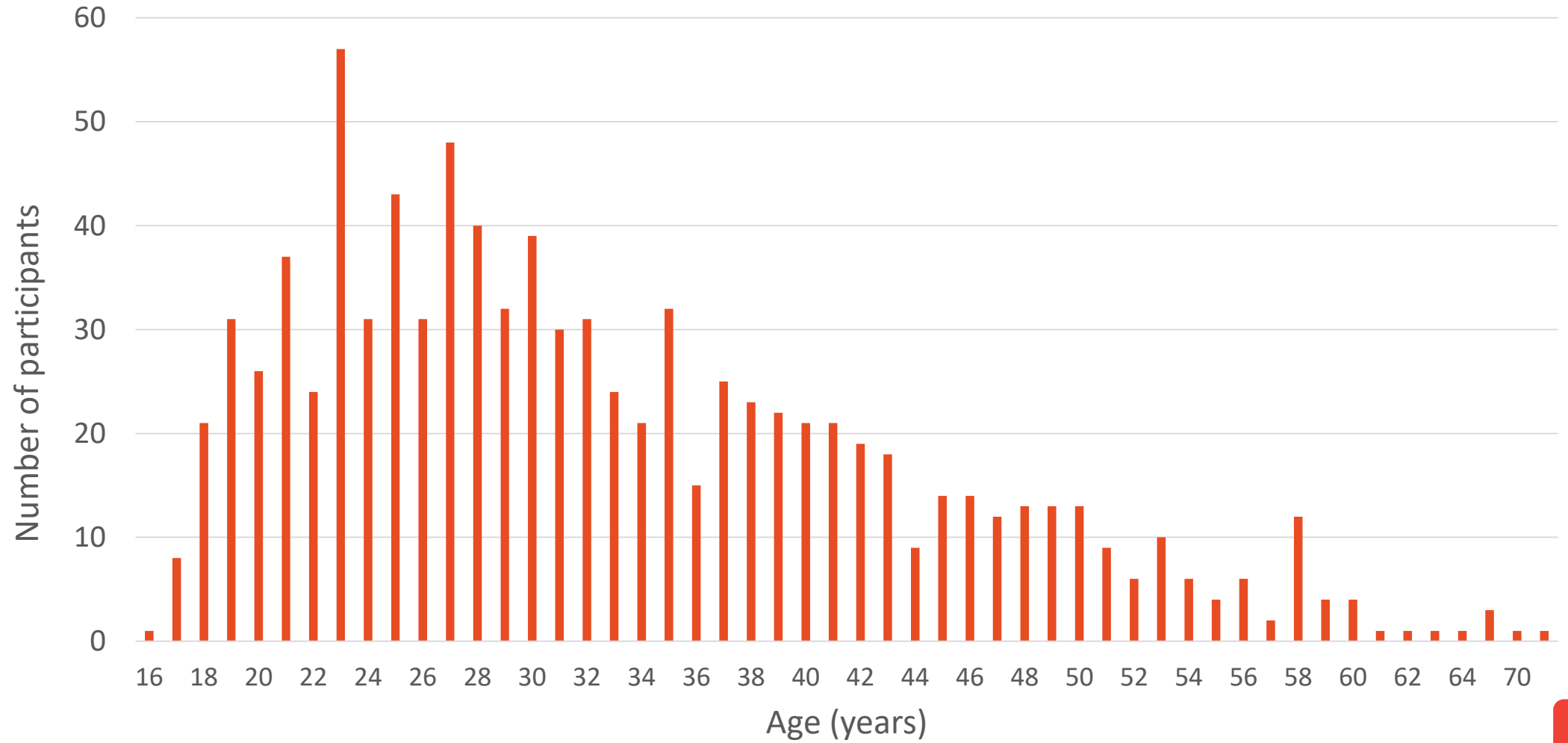
Results

- 948 completed the questionnaire
- 479 (51%) described themselves as Gay/Bisexual Men
- 305 (32%) identified as Black, Asian, or another minority ethnicity

Demographics (n=948)



Client Age



The questionnaire

- Please state if the following statements are true, false, or if you are unsure

Having vaginal or anal sex without a condom makes HIV transmission more likely

Activities like oral sex, touching, and kissing carry little to no risk for getting or transmitting HIV

Oil-based lubricant is safe to use with latex condoms

There is a medicine that can be taken immediately after exposure to HIV that reduces the chances of becoming infected

There is a medication that if taken regularly can reduce the risk of getting HIV

A person with HIV would always tell you they have HIV before having unprotected sex

HIV cannot be transmitted by a person who is on HIV medication who has an undetectable viral load

Using chems/recreational drugs has no effect on HIV transmission during unprotected anal or vaginal sex

Most people who get HIV experience flu-like symptoms in the first few weeks

The questionnaire

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Having vaginal or anal sex without a condom makes HIV transmission more likely

Activities like oral sex, touching, and kissing carry little to no risk for getting or transmitting HIV

Oil-based lubricant is safe to use with latex condoms

PEP

There is a medicine that can be taken immediately after exposure to HIV that reduces the chances of becoming infected

PrEP

There is a medication that if taken regularly can reduce the risk of getting HIV

A person with HIV would always tell you they have HIV before having unprotected sex

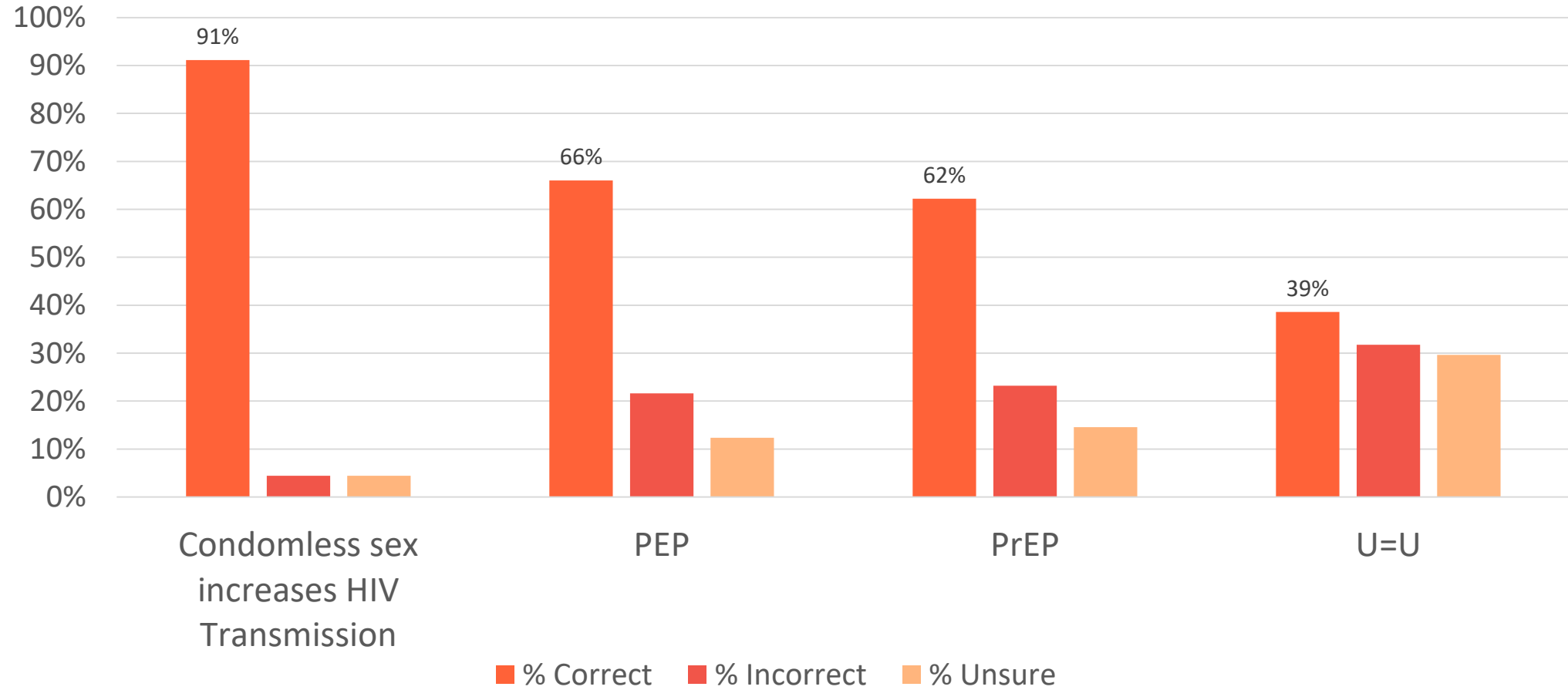
U=U

HIV cannot be transmitted by a person who is on HIV medication who has an undetectable viral load

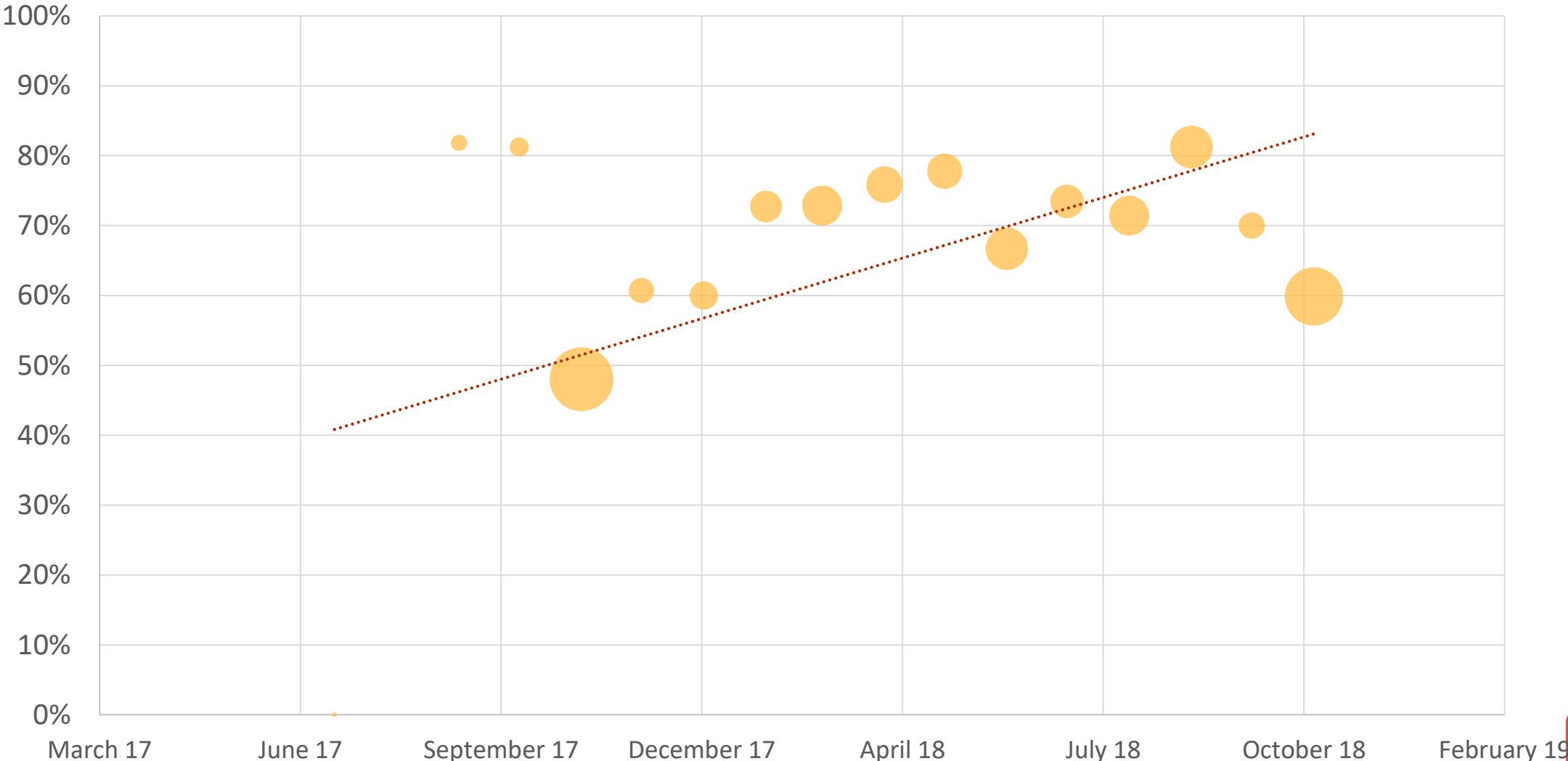
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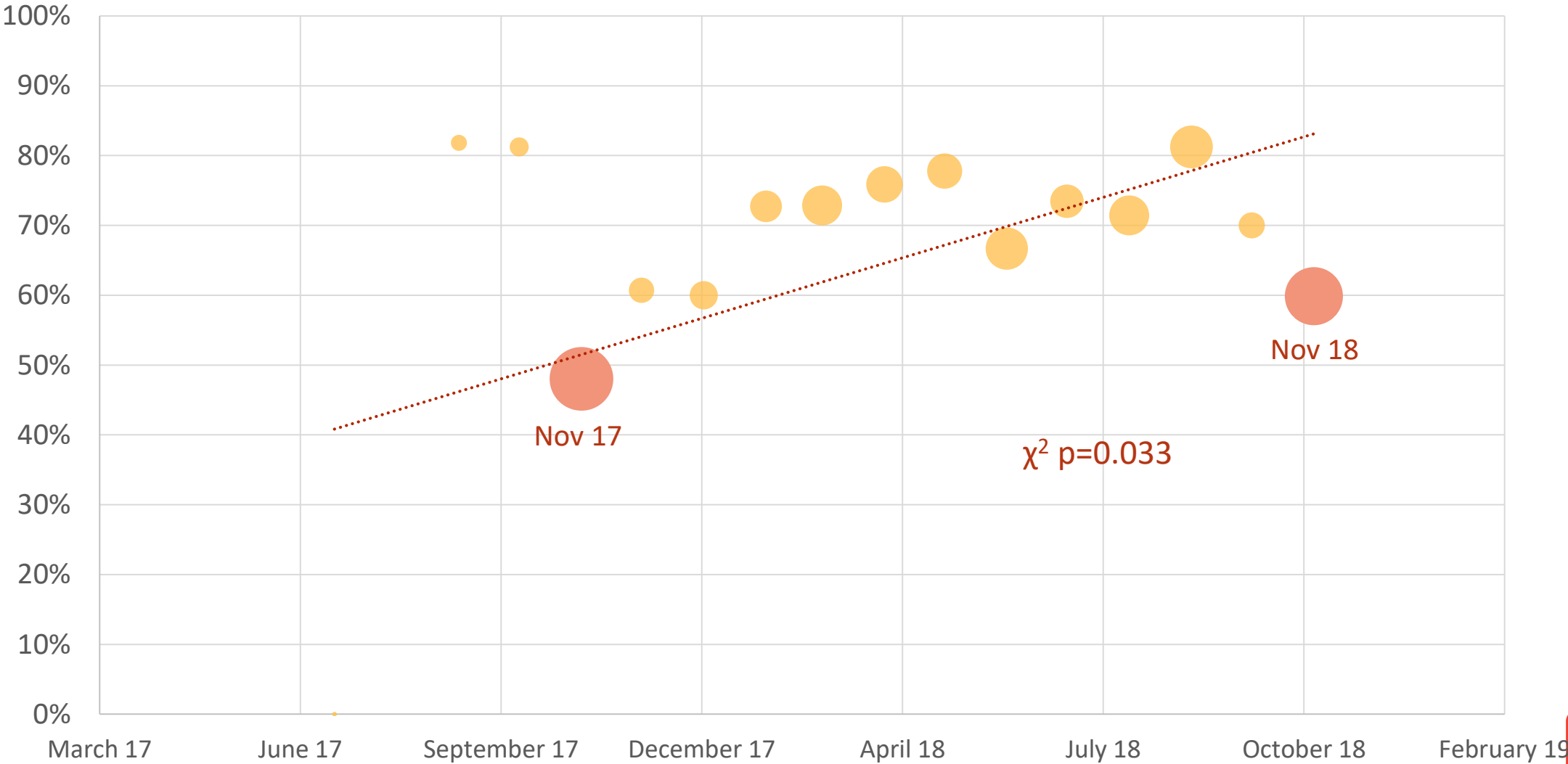
Correct Answers (n=948)



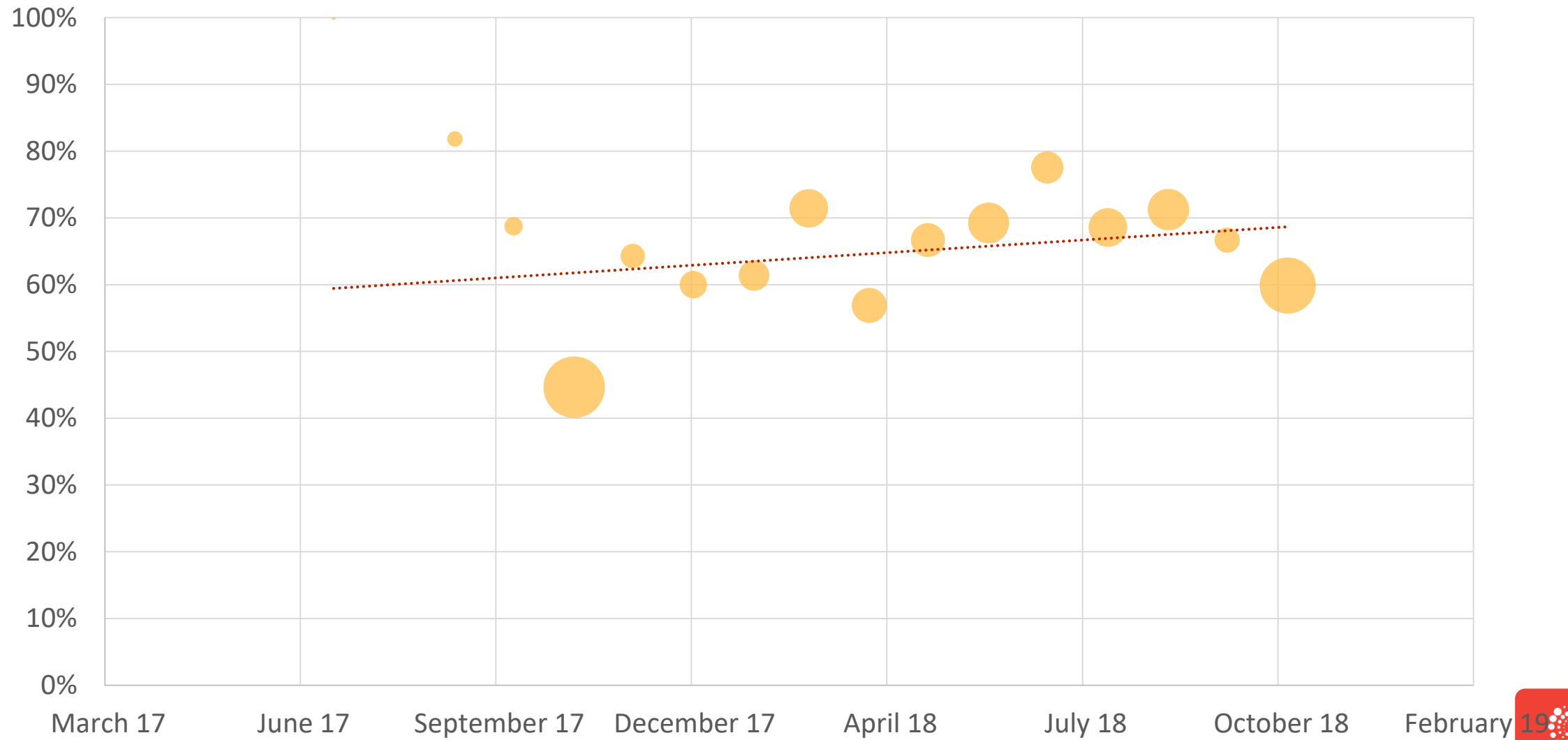
PEP Awareness over time



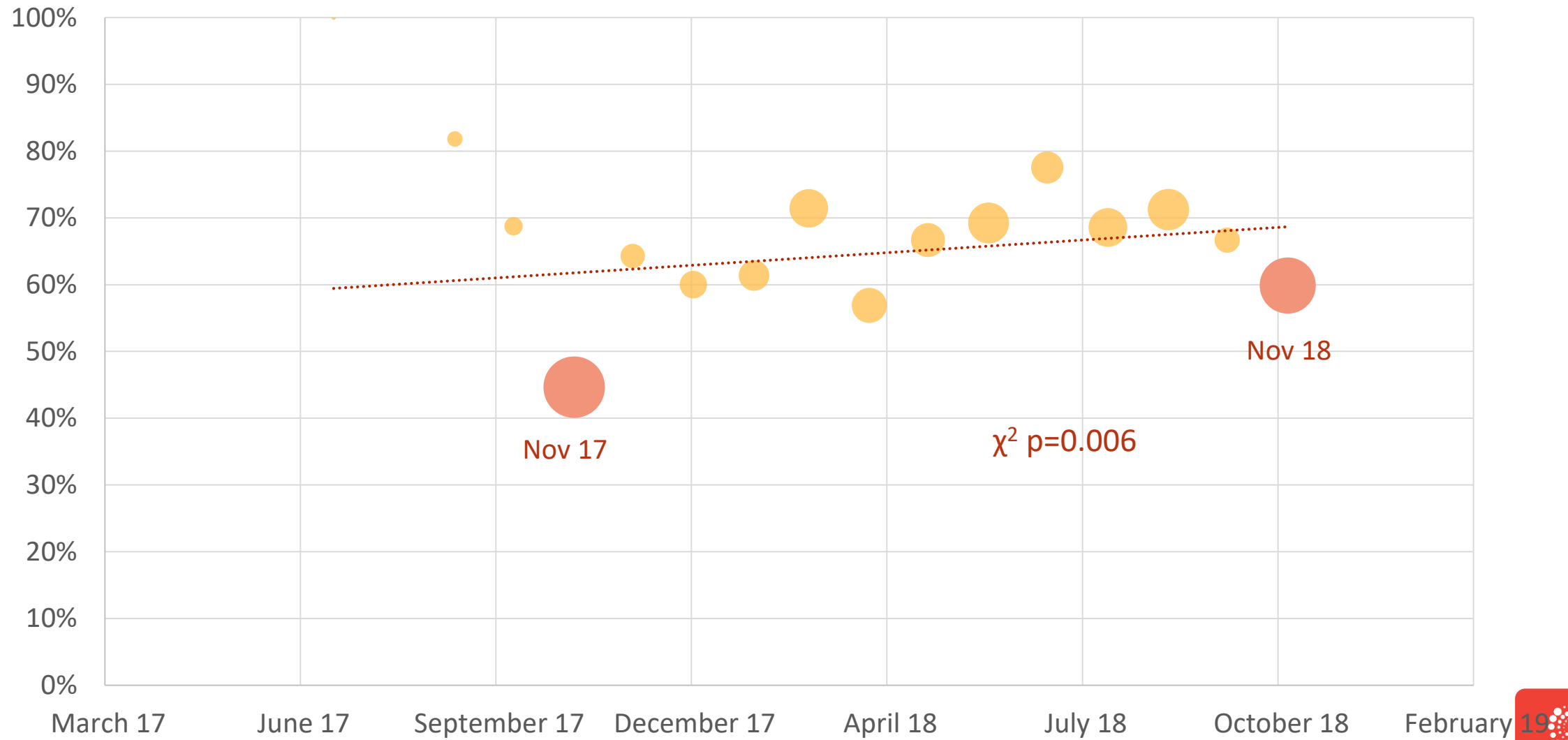
PEP Awareness over time



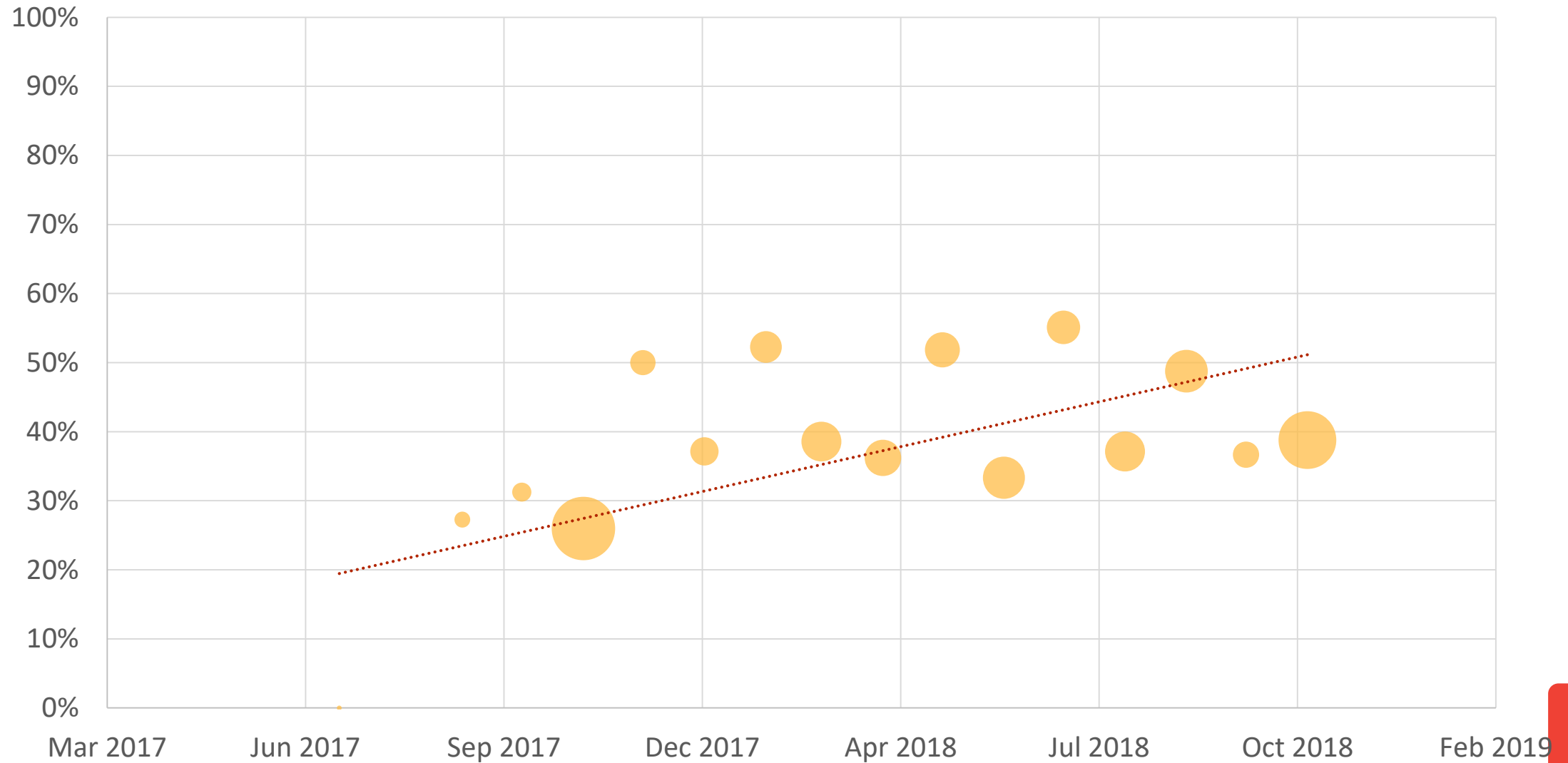
PrEP Awareness over time



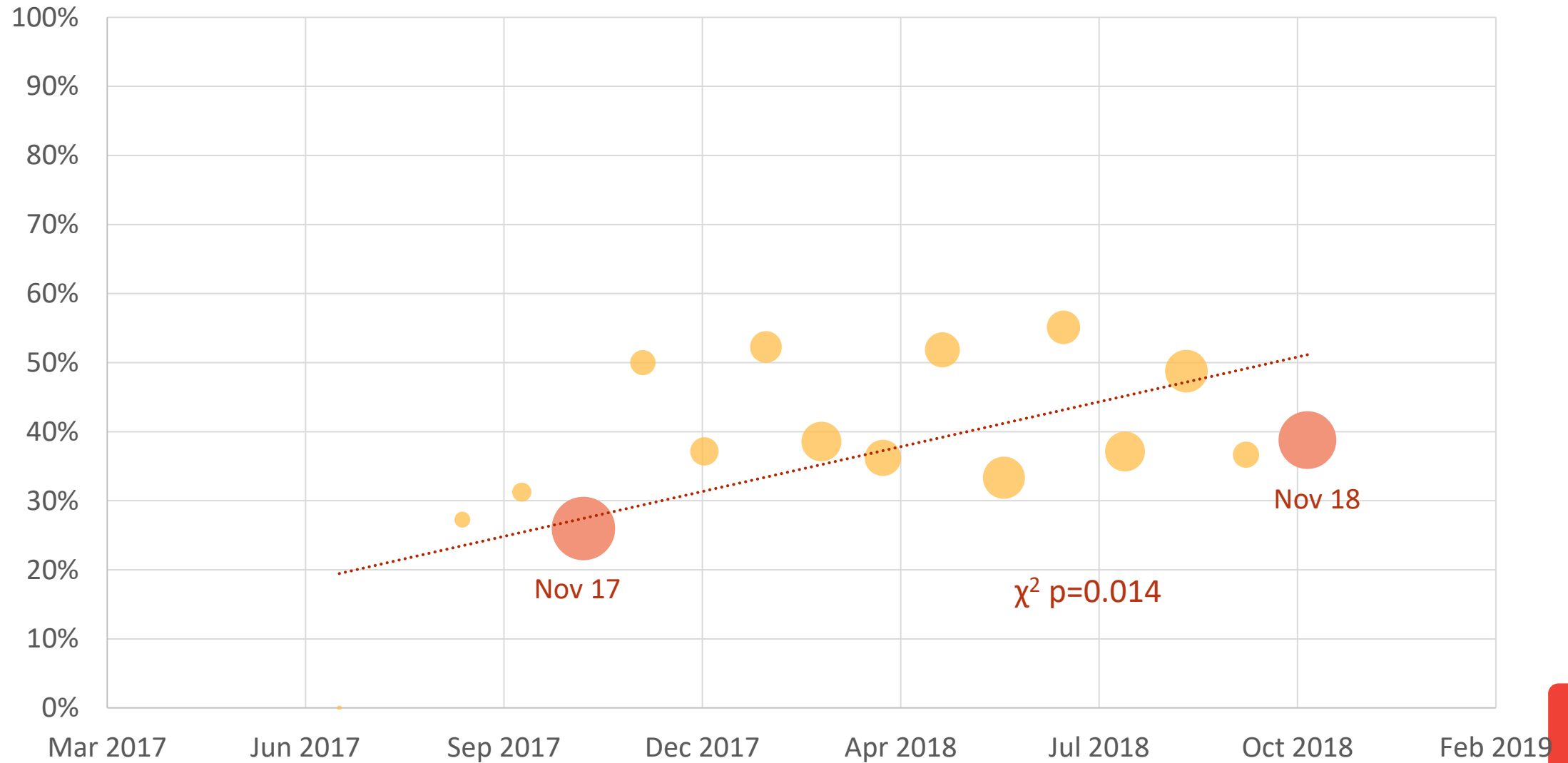
PrEP Awareness over time



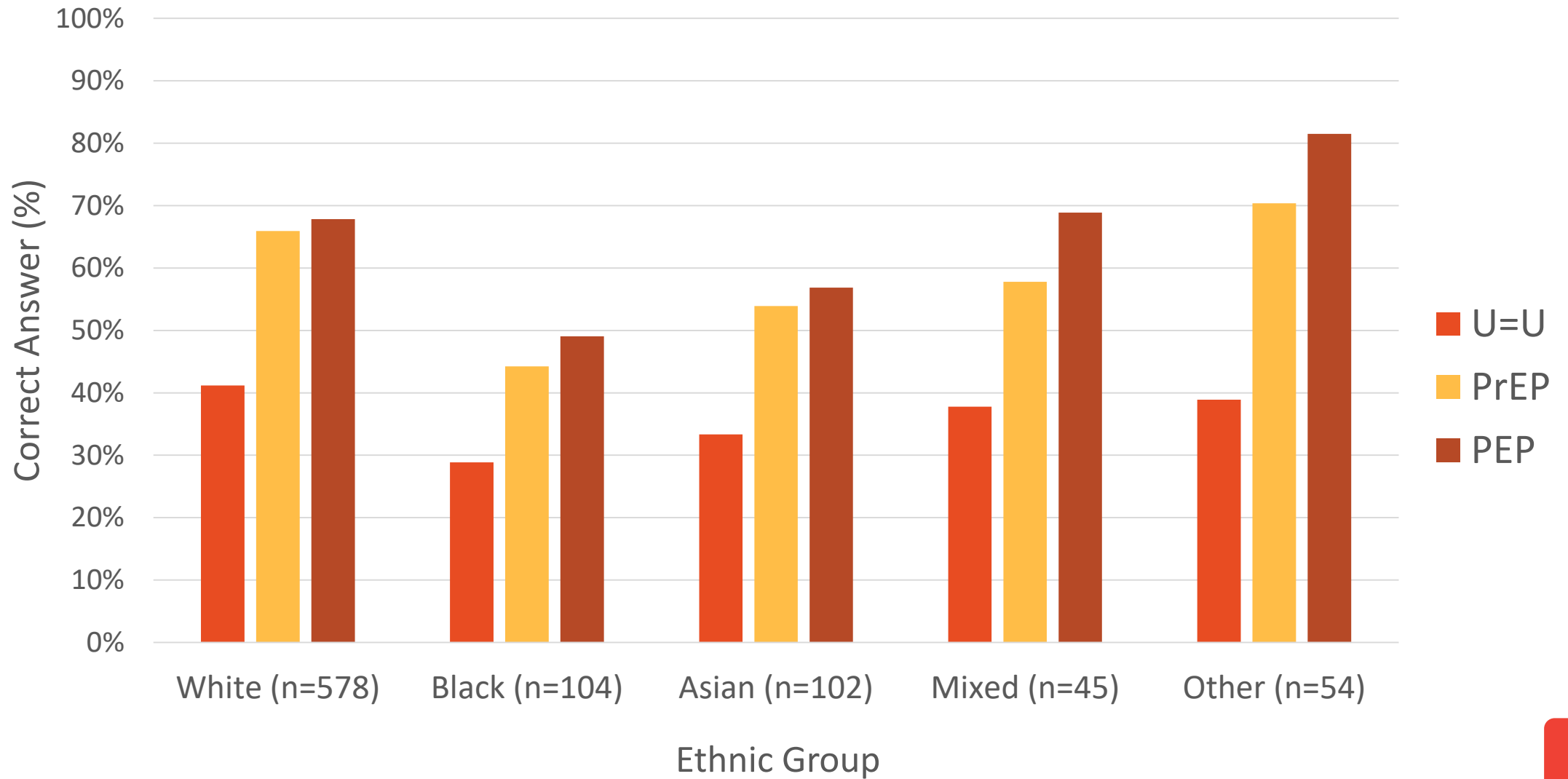
U=U awareness over time



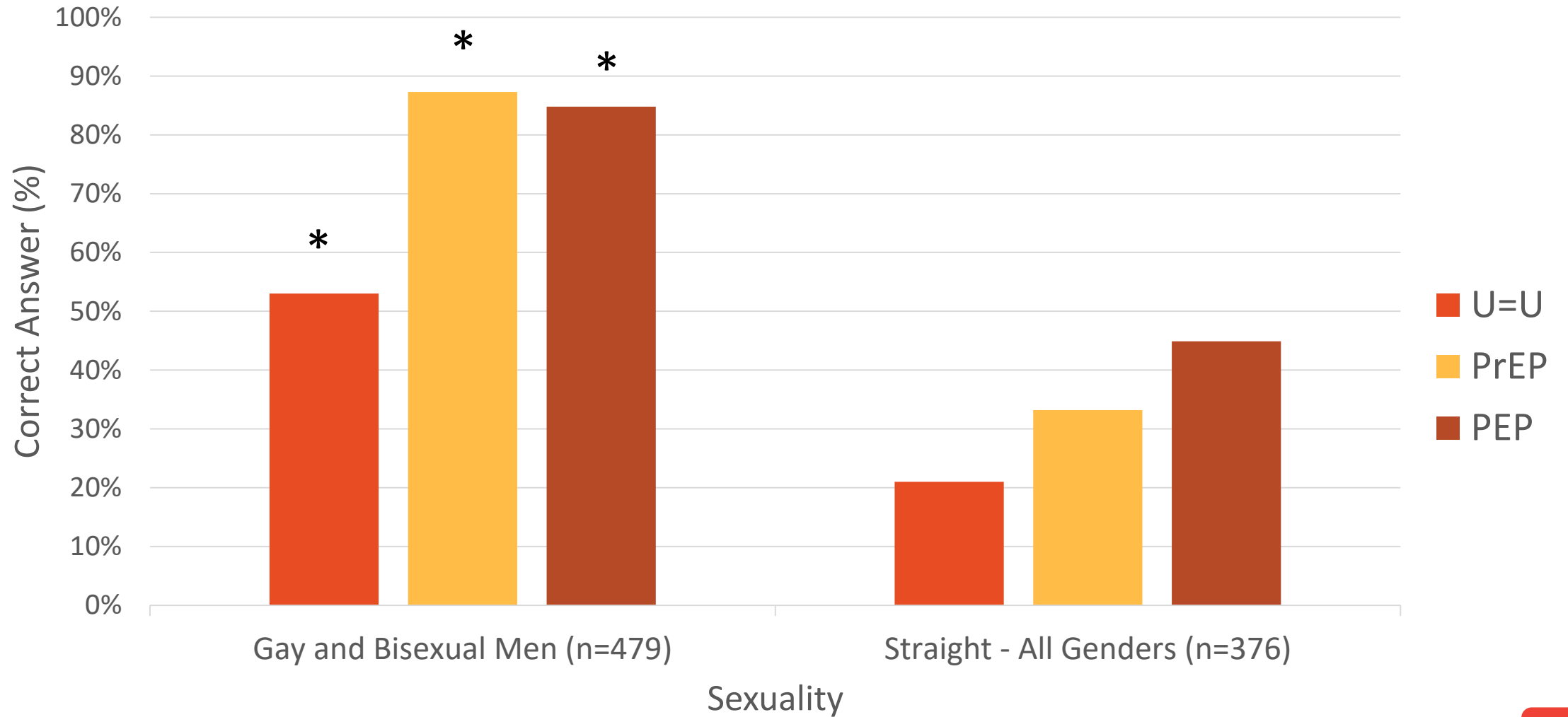
U=U awareness over time



Awareness of U=U, PrEP and PEP by Ethnicity



Awareness of U=U, PrEP and PEP by Sexuality

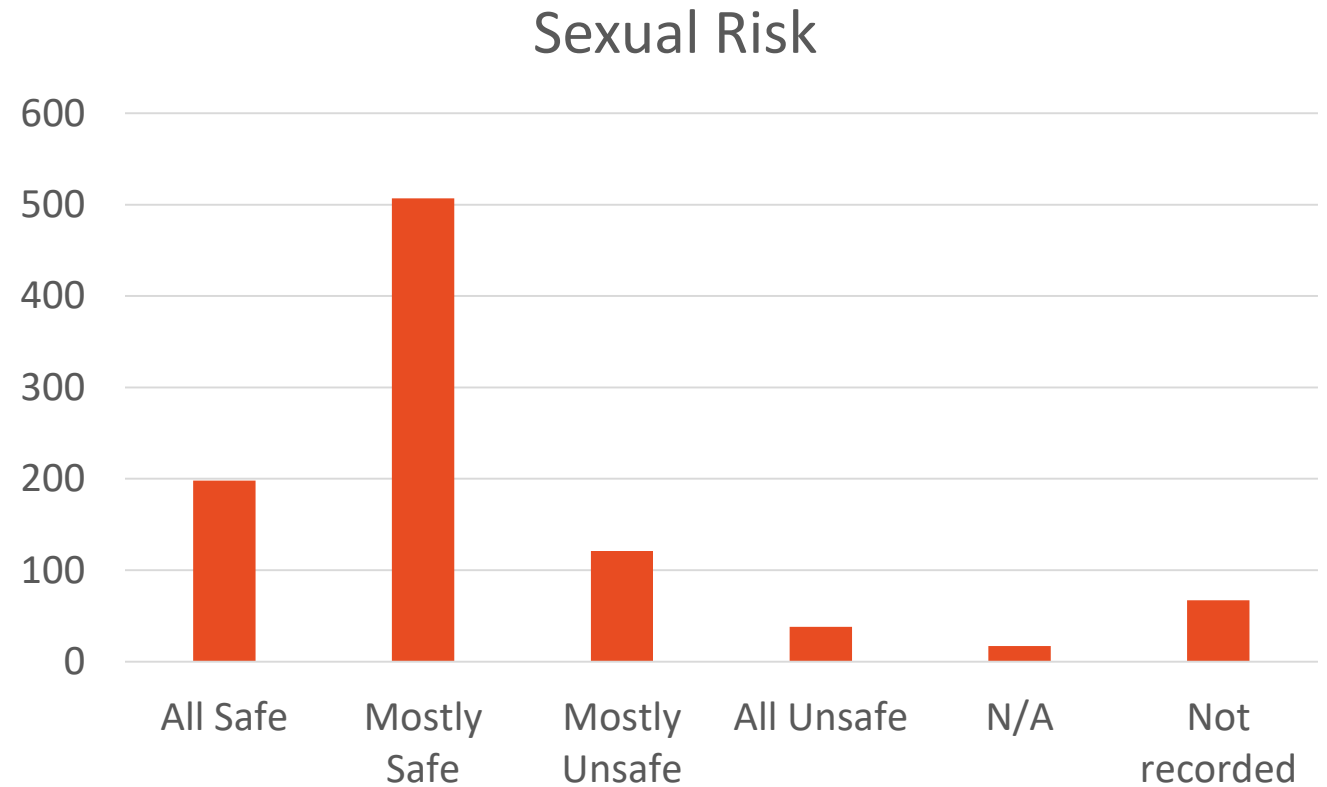


* χ^2 $p < 0.0001$

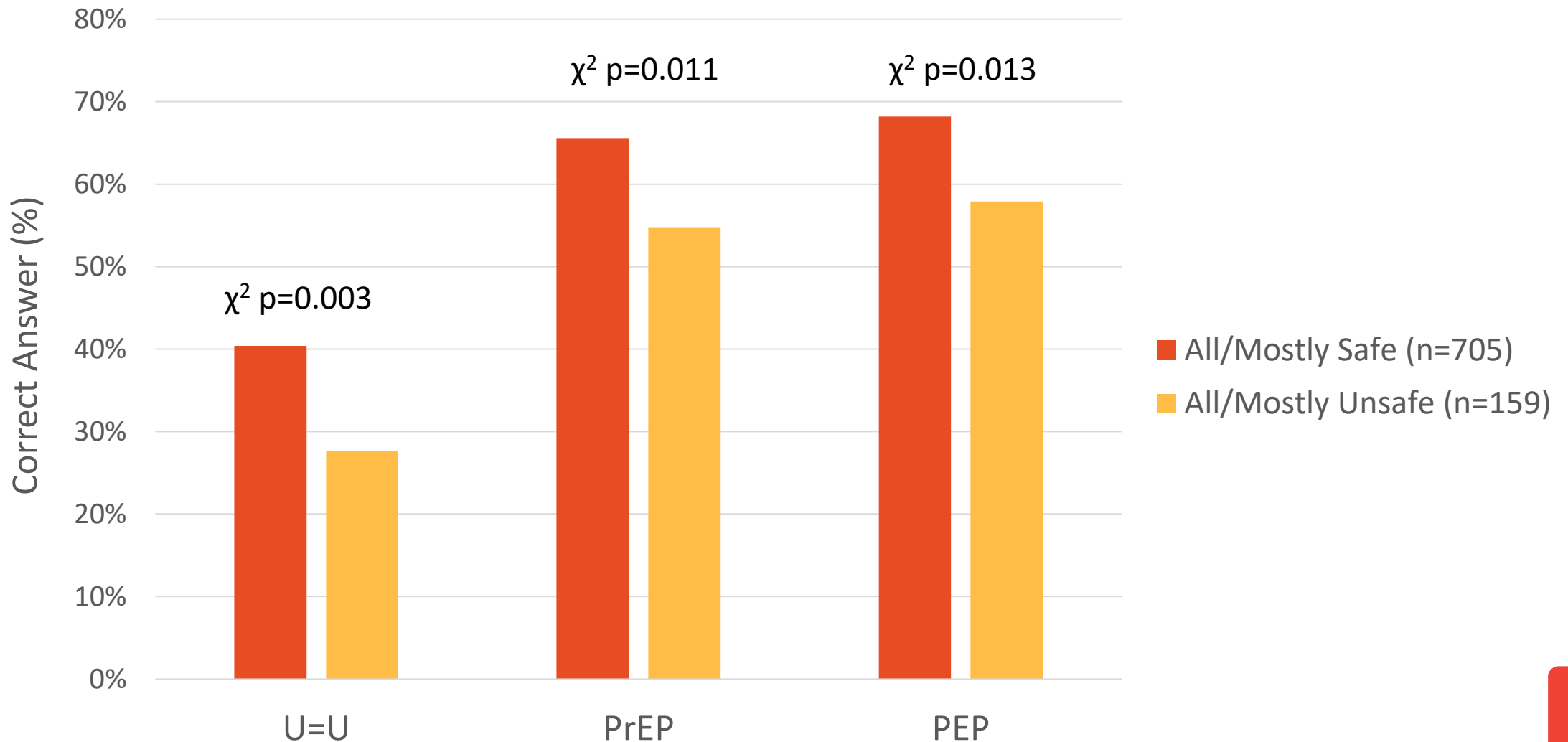
Sexual Risk Stratification

- Risk of sex in last 12 months?

- All safe
- Mostly safe
- Mostly unsafe
- All unsafe
- N/A



Awareness of U=U, PrEP and PEP by Sexual Risk



Key Points

1. Awareness of U=U was lower than of PrEP/PEP
2. Awareness has been steadily increasing over time
3. Awareness was lowest in Black and Asian ethnic groups
4. Gay and Bisexual Men were more aware than straight people
5. Those practicing safer sex were more aware than those practicing less safe sex

Conclusions

- Awareness of PEP, PrEP and U=U is increasing
- The majority remain unaware of U=U

- Increased awareness is associated with safer sex
- Increasing knowledge in BAME communities should be a priority

- An approach involving community organisations could achieve this

Acknowledgements

We'd like to thank the whole outreach team at Spectra who collected this data, the office staff who digitised the data, and Dee Wang who kindly provided the anonymised data on which analysis was performed.

References

- ¹ Sophus A.L & Mitchell J.W (2019). A review of approaches used to increase awareness of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in the United States. *AIDS and Behavior*. Doi: 10.1007/s10461-018-2305-0.
- ² Leshin D., Olshtain-Pops K., Moses A & Elinar H (2019). Limited awareness of the effective timing of HIV post-exposure prophylaxis among people with high-risk exposure to HIV. *European Journal of Clinical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases*. 38(4): 779-784.
- ³ Raifman J., Dean L.T., Montgomery M.C., Almante A., Arrington-Sanders R., Stein M.D., Nuun A.S., Sosnowy C.D & Chan, P.A (2019). Racial and ethnic disparities in HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis awareness among men who have sex with men. *AIDS and Behavior*. Doi: 10.1007/s10461-019-02462-3
- ⁴ Rendina H.J & Parsons J.T (2019). Factors associated with perceived accuracy of the *Undetectable = Untransmittable* slogan among men who have sex with men: Implications for messaging scale-up and implementation. *Journal of the International AIDS Society*. Doi: 10.1002/jia2/25055.