

Session/Poster#

Presenter

**C27**

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**Increasing HIV/AIDS and Mental Health Knowledge Among Brooklyn, NY Residents: A Retrospective Evaluation of the 2020 Gilead HIV/AIDS and Mental Health Stigma Education Program - Customers**

**Background:** This study examined the effectiveness of the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health (AAIUH) and Gilead Sciences, Inc, HIV/AIDS, and Mental Health Stigma Education Initiative in increasing HIV/AIDS prevention and mental health knowledge among customers of barbershops and hair salons in central Brooklyn. The initiative was expected to increase the knowledge of HIV/AIDS and mental health among barbershop and hair salon customers.

**Methods:** High school and college students enrolled in the AAIUH's Doris Duke Charitable Foundation Clinical Research program examined data collected during the Gilead AAIUH HIV/AIDS and Mental Health Initiative. Barbers and hairstylists in Central Brooklyn were recruited and trained as advocates to educate clients on PrEP and PEP use. Forty-four customers' change in knowledge was measured with pre- and post-survey assessments administered 3 months apart by their stylists. The Wilcoxon test assessed the difference in pre- and post-scores to measure improvement in knowledge.

**Results:** 29.55% of customers' HIV/AIDS knowledge scores decreased while 47.73% of scores increased,  $z = -4.023$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . 20.45% of customers' mental health knowledge scores decreased while 65.91% of scores increased,  $z = -1.506$ ,  $p = 0.132$ .

**Conclusion:** The Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health and Gilead Sciences, Inc, HIV/AIDS, and Mental Health Stigma Education Initiative may be effective in reducing HIV/AIDS risk and increasing mental health awareness among beauty-salons customers in NYC. This can lead to a higher willingness to use PrEP, reducing HIV transmission.