

Sexual behaviour, partner choice, and prevention practices among gay, bisexual and queer cis-men living with HIV in clinical care

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Conflicts of interest

- I have no conflict of interest to declare





Background

Gay, bisexual and queer men (GBQ) living with HIV who are on treatment can have a long life expectancy and a healthy and active sex life without the risk of transmitting HIV to their sexual partners.

GBQ men living with HIV in clinical care employ a range of biomedical and behavioural HIV and sexually transmitted infection (STI) transmission prevention strategies while engaging in sex.





Objectives

- How frequently are GBQ men having sex?
- What kinds of sex are GBQ men having?
- Who are GBQ men having sex with?
- How are GBQ men practicing safe sex? (e.g., biomedical, condoms)

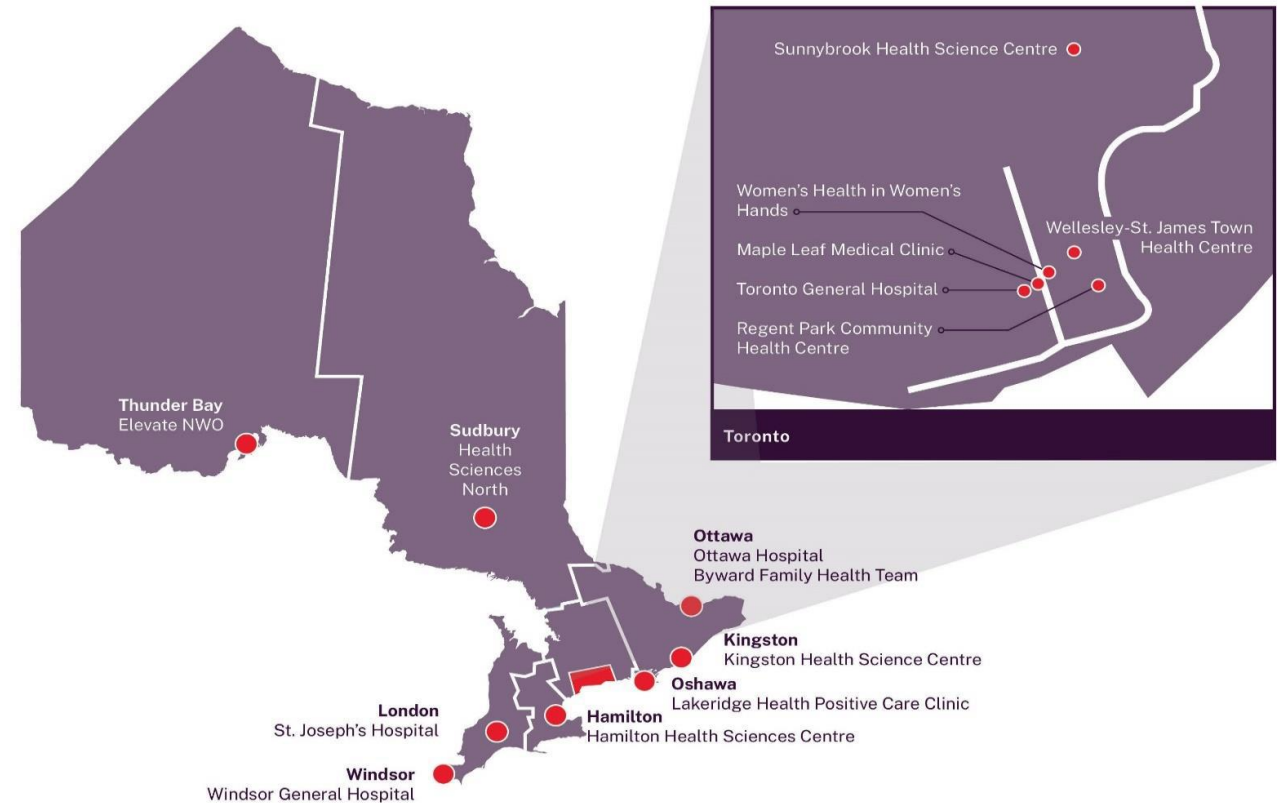




What is the OHTN Cohort Study (OCS)

Study administered by the Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN) with funding from the Ministry of Health

- Community governed open longitudinal cohort study of people living with HIV
- >8000 participants since 1995
- 15 clinics in Ontario
- Clinical data and questionnaire data collected annually
- >2400 questionnaires collected throughout 2023





Methods

- Sexual practice and behaviour module was added to OCS questionnaire in 2019
- Separate module for cis men, cis women, and trans participants
- Questions are asked at baseline and follow-up
- Selected most recent questionnaire from 2019 to 2022
- Structured questions for the previous 3 months included:
 - number of sexual partners
 - types of sexual activities
 - partner HIV status
 - condom use





Module Questions

In the past 3 months, have you had any kind of sex with partners who identified as...?.

This applies to all partners, including spouses / primary partners.

Cisgender men

- None
- One partner
- 2 partners
- 3-5 partners
- 6 or more partners
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

In the past 3 months, have you had the following kinds of sex with male partners?

i. Any (any contact with another person's genital parts, including hand jobs/mutual masturbation, rimming, and other contact)

ii. Oral sex

iii. Top (Insertive) anal sex.

iv. Bottom (Receptive) anal sex

- None
- One partner
- 2 partners
- 3-5 partners
- 6 or more partners
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

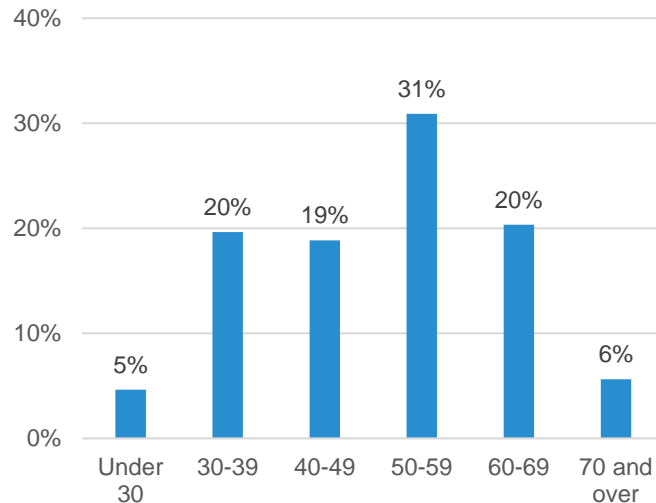




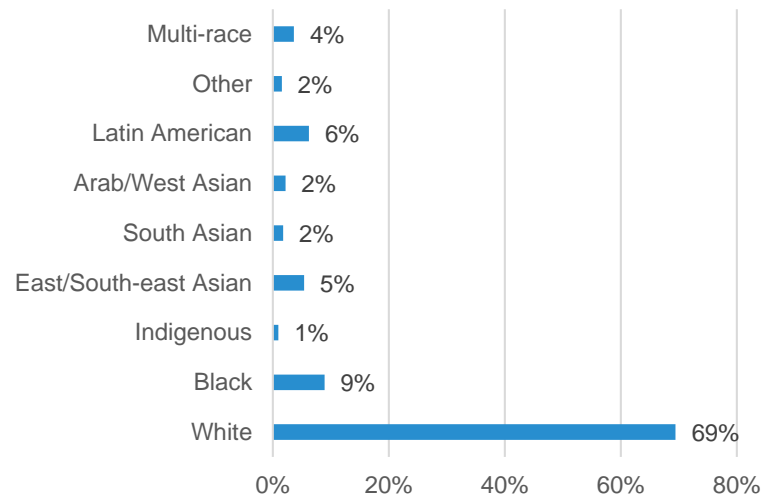
Who is in our analysis cohort?

1,620 self-identified gay, bisexual and queer cis-men completed the module
Most participants were white, single, and older (median age=56),

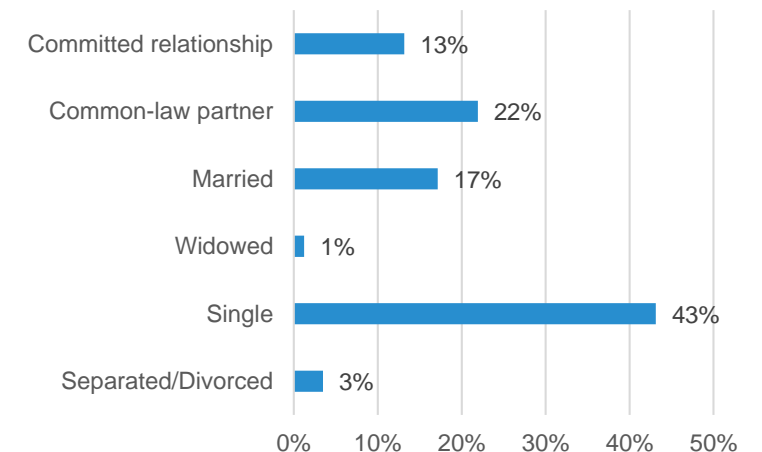
Age for GBQ cis males who had a new partner in past 3 months



Race for GBQ cis males who had a new partner in the past 3 months



Marital status for GBQ cis males who had a new partner in the past 3 months

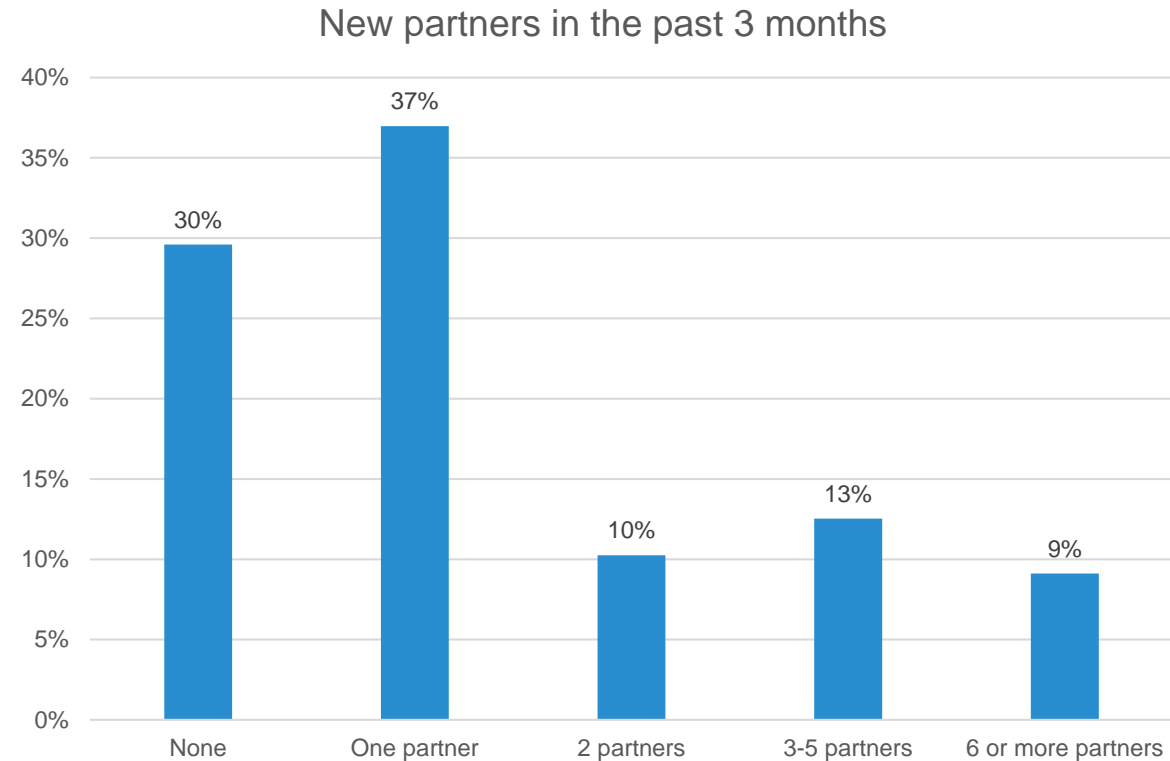




New partners in the past 3 months

70% of participants had a new partner in the past 3 months

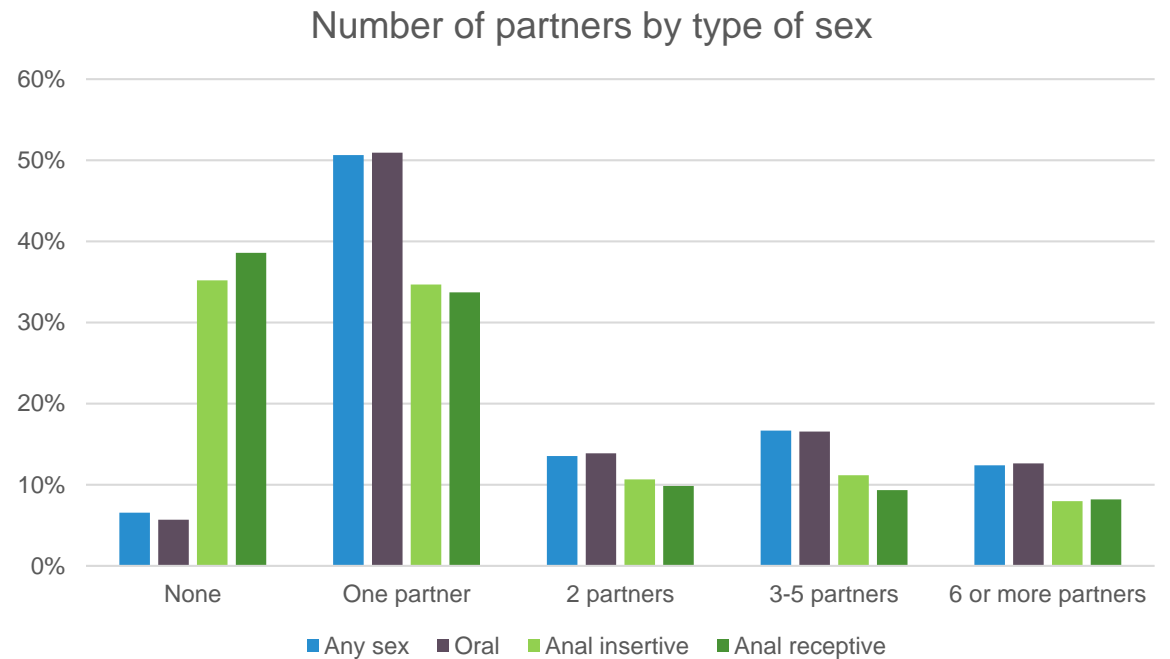
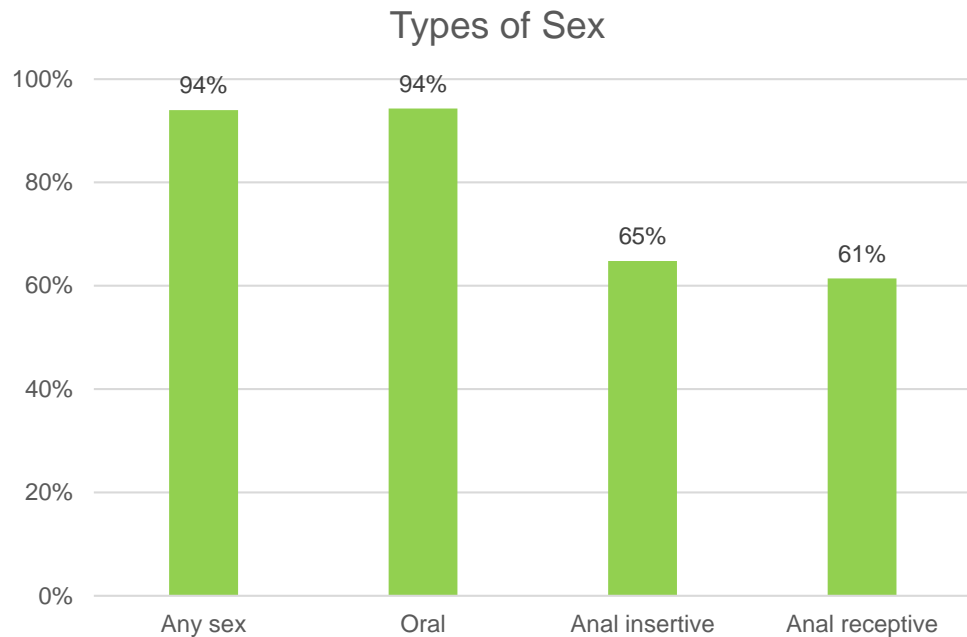
Apps, websites, and bars were most commonly used when seeking new partners





Types of Sex

Most GBQ men who had a new partner in the past 3 months participated in some type of sex



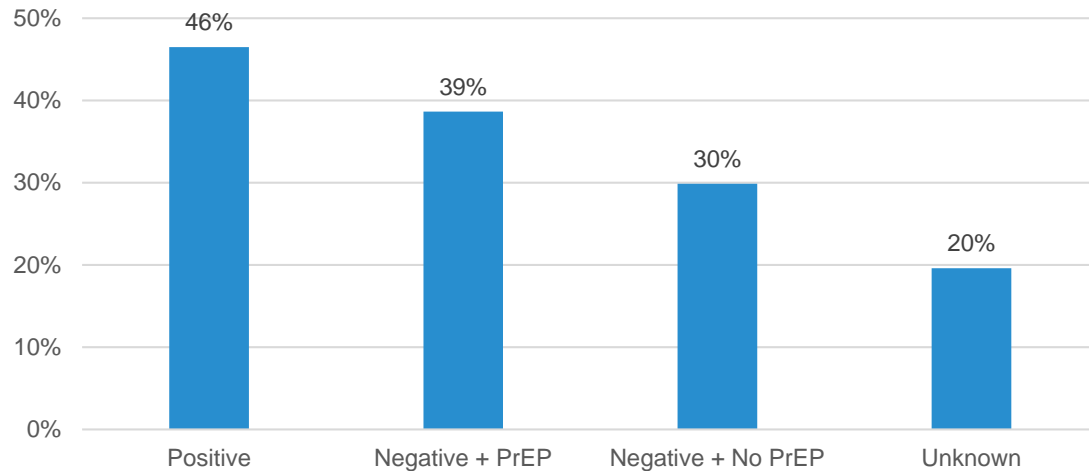


Partner HIV Status and Anal Sex Frequency

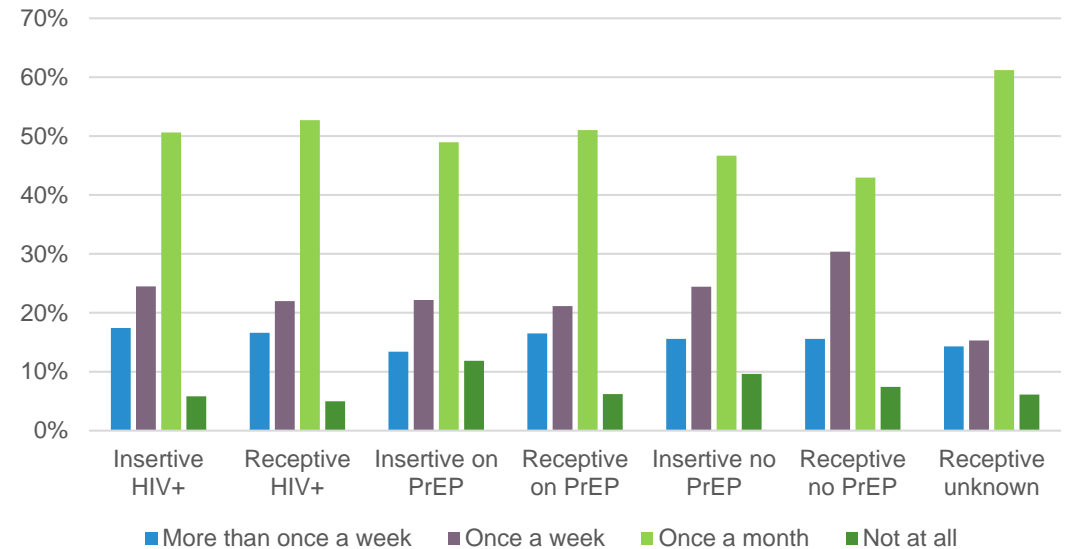
Most participants had anal sex with a partner who was living with HIV or who was HIV negative and on PrEP

Frequency of sex was similar across type of anal sex and partner status

Anal sex by partner HIV Status



Frequency of anal sex by partner HIV status





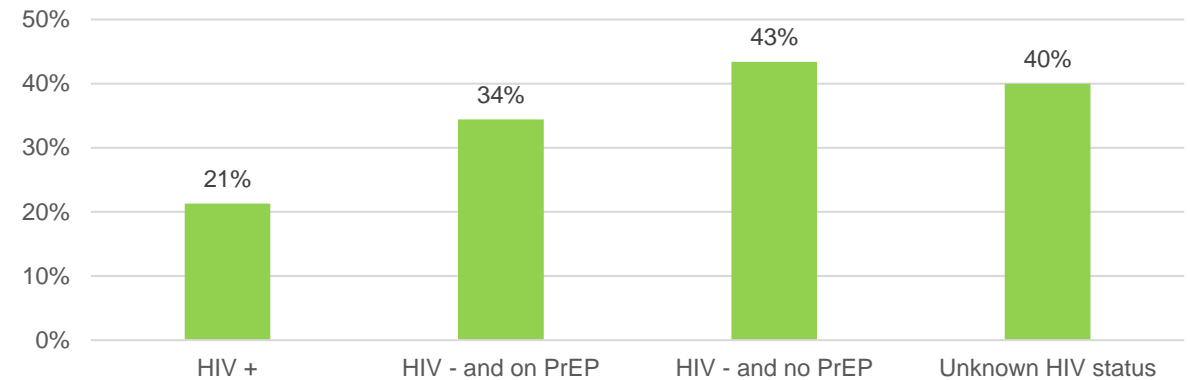
Anal Sex, Condom Use, and Viral Load

32% of all participants who had anal sex used condoms

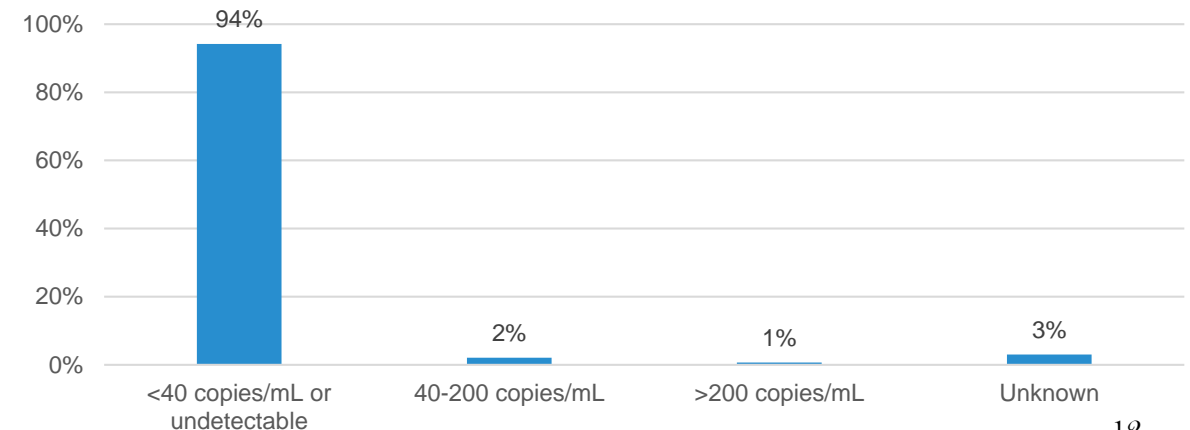
The proportion of participants who used condoms was higher when their sexual partner was HIV negative and not on PrEP

96% of those who had anal sex had a suppressed viral load

Condom use by partner HIV status



Viral load among those who had anal sex





Conclusions

GBQ men living with HIV who are in care currently practice various methods to prevent HIV and STI transmission

- Treatment as prevention
- Sexual practices that protect their partners
- Choosing partners who are living with HIV or who are on PrEP





Limitations

Biases:

- Cohort is skewed older and white
- Majority of cohort are virally suppressed because they are in care
- Question window only asks past 3 months

Error in question programming 2019 to 2022:

- Cis male insertive sex with partner whose HIV status is unknown
- Cis male insertive sex with partner whose HIV status is unknown and condom use





Next Steps

- Assess associations with demographic characteristics
- Compare with recent STI data
- Examine associations with self-reported general and mental health
- Conduct similar analysis for heterosexual cis males, cis female and trans participants





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Thank you!

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For more information about OCS:

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