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# PrEP and Intimate Partner Violence among Gay, Bisexual, and Other Men Who Have Sex with Men: A Scoping Review of the Literature

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## Introduction

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) continues to be a serious public health concern, impacting nearly affecting diverse communities worldwide. Approximately one in three men experience sexual violence, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.<sup>1</sup> Men who have sex with men (MSM) are a particularly vulnerable population, facing unique challenges in the context of both IPV and HIV prevention. MSM experience disproportionately high rates of IPV and remain at an elevated risk of HIV transmission, making them a critical target group for research and intervention efforts.<sup>2,3</sup>

In recent decades, significant strides have been made in advancing the understanding and management of HIV transmission, particularly among Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM). However, despite notable progress, MSM continue to face disproportionate rates of HIV acquisition.<sup>3</sup> HIV PrEP offers an opportunity for individuals to proactively protect themselves from HIV by taking antiretroviral medications daily. Despite its proven efficacy, PrEP uptake and adherence among MSM, particularly those experiencing IPV, may be impacted by multifaceted barriers, including fear of disclosure, mistrust of healthcare systems, and financial constraints.<sup>4</sup>

A preliminary search of PubMed, the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, and JBI Evidence Synthesis was conducted. No completed nor underway reviews were identified on the topic of intimate partner violence and PrEP in MSM. A review is needed in order to identify health education needs for this population, as well as to inform potential interventions to reach this population.

## Review question

This review aims to explore, describe, and assess the extent of literature on the current state of research on HIV PrEP, focused on gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men who experience intimate partner violence. This review also aims to identify areas for further research and to create interventions to increase PrEP awareness and utilization in this population.

## Keywords

Intimate Partner Violence, HIV, PrEP, Men Who Have Sex with Men, Scoping Review

## Eligibility criteria

### Participants

Studies that focus on men who have sex with men will be included in this review. This includes male study participants that identify as gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men.

### Concept

Studies that focus on IPV and PrEP in GBMSM will be included.

### Context

Studies conducted in any setting will be included. The study setting (e.g., clinic, social services agency) and geographic distribution of studies will be mapped.

### Outcomes

Outcomes of the studies and the types of instruments utilized to assess any outcomes will be mapped descriptively, but will not be analyzed.

### Types of Sources

This scoping review will consider both experimental and quasi-experimental study designs including randomized controlled trials, non-randomized controlled trials, before and after studies and interrupted time-series studies. In addition, analytical observational studies including prospective and retrospective cohort studies, case-control studies and analytical cross-sectional studies will be considered for inclusion. This review will also consider descriptive observational study designs including case series, individual case reports and descriptive cross-sectional studies for inclusion. Qualitative studies will also be considered that focus on qualitative data including, but not limited to, designs such as phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, qualitative description, action research and feminist research. Commentaries and reviews will not be included in this scoping review.

## Methods

This scoping review will be conducted in accordance with the JBI methodology for scoping reviews.<sup>5</sup>

### Search strategy

The search strategy will aim to locate both published and unpublished studies related to IPV and PrEP in MSM. An initial limited search of MEDLINE was undertaken to identify articles on the topic. The text words contained in the titles and abstracts of relevant articles, and the index terms used to describe the articles will be used to develop a full search strategy for PubMed, CINAHL, PsycInfo, Embase, and Web of Science. The search strategy, including all identified keywords and index terms, will be adapted for each included database and/or information source (see Appendix 1). The reference list of all included sources of evidence will be screened for additional studies. Inclusion criteria for studies are to be published/available from 2012 (first year of HIV PrEP availability) to 2023, available as full text and in English, report on IPV and PrEP in MSM. Studies that are not published in English, are literature reviews or commentaries, only address IPV or PrEP alone, or do not include MSM will be excluded.

### Study/Source of Evidence selection

Following the search, all identified citations will be collated and uploaded into Zotero and duplicates removed. Following a pilot test, titles and abstracts will then be screened by two

or more independent reviewers for assessment against the inclusion criteria for the review. Potentially relevant sources will be retrieved in full. The full text of selected citations will be assessed in detail against the inclusion criteria by two or more independent reviewers. Reasons for exclusion of sources of evidence at full text that do not meet the inclusion criteria will be recorded and reported in the scoping review. Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers at each stage of the selection process will be resolved through discussion, or with an additional reviewer/s. The results of the search and the study inclusion process will be reported in full in the final scoping review and presented in a Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses extension for scoping review (PRISMA-ScR) flow diagram.<sup>6</sup>

### Data Extraction

Data will be extracted from papers included in the scoping review by two or more independent reviewers using a data extraction tool developed by the study research team. The data extracted will include specific details about the study characteristics (author, year of publication, journal name), characteristics of the participants in the study sample and sample size, the study methods (e.g., study design, data collection methods, data collection instruments, intervention characteristics), the study participants, and the descriptive and/or outcome data related to IPV and HIV PrEP. The draft extraction form will be piloted by the reviewers, with at least three papers being extracted independently by each reviewer and the data compared. While conducting the first three data abstractions, the reviewers will make notes about any needed updates to the extraction form. These will be discussed with the comparison of the extracted data. The extraction form will be updated as needed and the rest of the articles will then be extracted. Any modifications will be detailed in the scoping review.

### Data Analysis and Presentation

Data will be reported in tabular or graphical format, where appropriate. Study populations and settings will be mapped in detail and will include a graphical representation of the study focus, as well as a narrative summary of the characteristics of the study aims. The type of study design (e.g., intervention, cross-sectional survey) and methods of assessment will be descriptively mapped. A summary of the data related to IPV and HIV PrEP will be presented. Dissemination is planned via academic conferences and publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

### Funding

No external funding will be utilized to conduct this review.

### Conflicts of interest

None of the authors have any conflicts of interest to report.

## References

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# Appendices

## Appendix I: Search strategy

### Search strategy for PubMed:

('pre-exposure prophylaxis' OR 'preexposure prophylaxis' OR 'PrEP' OR 'PREP') AND ('MSM' OR 'GBMSM' OR 'men') AND ('intimate partner violence' OR 'domestic violence' OR 'gender-based violence' OR 'marital violence' OR 'spousal abuse' OR 'spousal violence')

### Search strategy for CINAHL:

("pre-exposure prophylaxis" OR "preexposure prophylaxis" OR 'PrEP' OR 'PREP') AND ("Men who have sex with men" OR 'Gay' OR 'bisexual' OR 'men' ) AND ("intimate partner violence" OR 'domestic violence' OR "gender-based violence" OR "marital violence" OR "spousal abuse" OR "spousal violence")

### Search strategy for Embase:

("pre-exposure prophylaxis" OR "preexposure prophylaxis" OR 'PrEP' OR 'PREP') AND ("Men who have sex with men" OR 'Gay' OR 'bisexual' OR 'men') AND ("intimate partner violence" OR 'domestic violence' OR "gender-based violence" OR "marital violence" OR "spousal abuse" OR "spousal violence")

### Search strategy for PsycInfo:

("pre-exposure prophylaxis" OR "preexposure prophylaxis" OR 'PrEP' OR 'PREP' ) AND ("Men who have sex with men" OR 'Gay' OR 'bisexual' OR 'men' ) AND ("intimate partner violence" OR 'domestic violence' OR "gender-based violence" OR "marital violence" OR "spousal abuse" OR "spousal violence")

### Search strategy for Web of Science:

("pre-exposure prophylaxis" OR "preexposure prophylaxis" OR 'PrEP' OR 'PREP' ) AND ("Men who have sex with men" OR 'Gay' OR 'bisexual' OR 'men' ) AND ("intimate partner violence" OR 'domestic violence' OR "gender-based violence" OR "marital violence" OR "spousal abuse" OR "spousal violence")