

# Determining the nature of COVID-19 impact on the provision of pre-exposure prophylaxis among key populations in Sub-Saharan Africa, a Systematic Review

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## INTRODUCTION

- Approximately 1.5 million people became newly infected with HIV in 2021 (UNAIDS, 2022).
- Key populations accounted for 70% of these new infections globally, and for 51% in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Ending the HIV epidemic requires a significant decline in new infections.
- HIV prevention services provide prevention combinations such as condoms, and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) which are key in reducing new infections.
- HIV key populations, are at high risk of HIV acquisition and transmission (Mishra, Silhol, Knight, Phaswana-Mafuya, Diouf, Wang, 2021)

**AIM:** To characterise the nature and extent of the impact of COVID-19 on the provision and uptake of PrEP services among key populations.

**METHODS:** Review designed and reported in accordance with Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines.

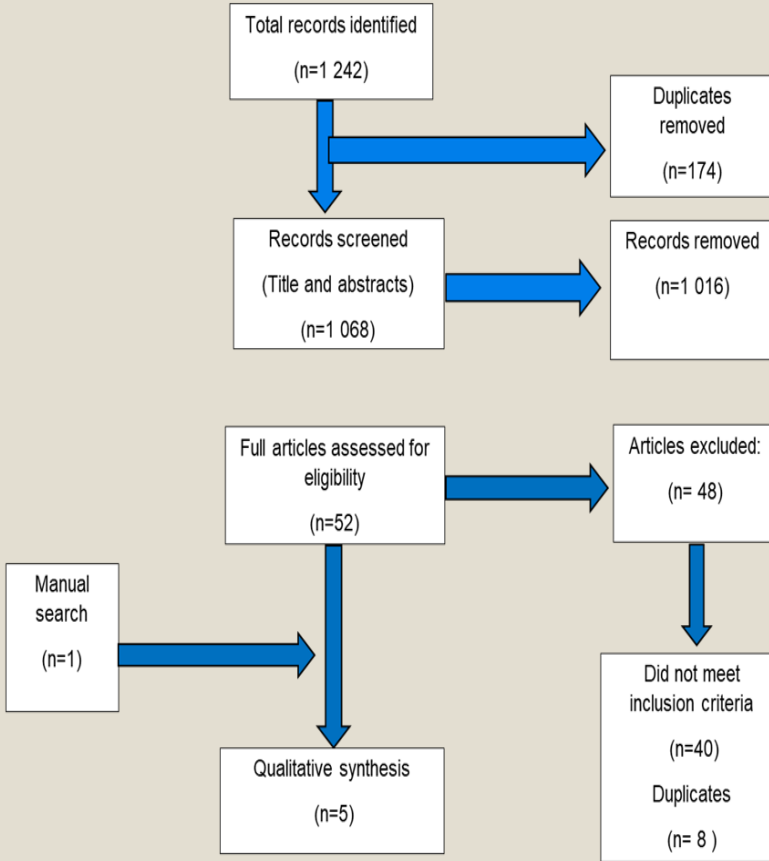
Protocol registered in the International Prospective Register of Systematic Reviews (PROSPERO; CRD42022342841).

Inclusion and exclusion criteria for selection of articles - primary studies on key populations reporting changes in PrEP provision and uptake and published between 2018 and 2021

## RESULTS

|                |         |                           |         |
|----------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|
| Medline        | (n=198) | CINAHL                    | (n=144) |
| Scopus         | (n=379) | Academic Science Ultimate | (n=443) |
| Science Direct | (n=78)  |                           |         |

Identification  
Screening  
Eligibility  
Included



## Themes: Impact of COVID-19 on PrEP provision and uptake

**HIV tests** - onsite rapid HIV testing increasingly replaced with HIV self-testing (HIVST).

**Social networks:** increased use of facebook, WhatsApp, Short Message Service use by PrEP providers and peer educators reported in 40% of the studies

**PrEP uptake**

- Changes in PrEP uptake inconsistent throughout period under study.
- Uptake varied with lockdown stages.
- Drastic fall in uptake in the first month to the sixth month of lockdowns.
- Innovative strategies to increase uptake implemented.
- As a result 40% of studies in this review reported increased PrEP Initiations.

**Access to health care and PrEP services** - 40% of the studies reported no interruptions, 40% did not report, 20% interruptions

**Differentiated service delivery** - 60% of studies reported an increase in community-based PrEP delivery, multi-month dispensing of PrEP, use of virtual platforms for appointment scheduling and PrEP initiation support.

## CONCLUSION

The coronavirus disease interrupted PrEP services and disrupted the traditional ways of delivering PrEP to key populations but paved the way for innovative strategies to PrEP service delivery.

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**PRISMA SELECTION FLOW DIAGRAM**