

## PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form (<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/site/about/resources/checklist.pdf>) and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below.

### ARTICLE DETAILS

<b>TITLE (PROVISIONAL)</b>	Intersectional stigma and its impact on HIV prevention and care among MSM and WSW in sub-Saharan African countries: A protocol for a scoping review
<b>AUTHORS</b>	Abubakari, Gamji M'Rabiu; Dada, Debbie; Nur, Jemal; Turner, DeAnne; Otchere, Amma; Tanis, Leonne; Ni, Zhao; Mashoud, Ibrahim; Nyhan, Kate; Nyblade, Laura; Nelson, Laron

### VERSION 1 – REVIEW

<b>REVIEWER</b>	Chadwick Campbell University of California San Francisco
<b>REVIEW RETURNED</b>	06-Jan-2021

<b>GENERAL COMMENTS</b>	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to review this protocol. This scoping review described will provide much needed knowledge about the ways intersecting stigmas affect marginalized populations who are highly impacted by HIV. I recommend acceptance of this manuscript. Though, there is one important suggestion I would like to make. At several points in the text (e.g. Abstract, page 2, lines 24-30; page 5, lines 28-40), I felt that one piece of intersectional theory should be made more explicit - that oppressions (and stigmas) are overlapping and co-occurring, yes, but they are also co-constitutive. While this last point is clear in some of the discussion of extant literature, it seems to get lost in some places and it reads as though, for example, MSM are experiencing "intersectional stigma with regards to same-sex attraction, gender-non-conforming behaviour, actual or perceived HIV status, and others" (p.5), not that being a gay or bisexual man actually changes what it means to have HIV in the eyes of others. This is a very small, but important edit, I believe. Though the manuscript is excellently written and is worthy of publication.</p>
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<b>REVIEWER</b>	Jacqueline Stephens Flinders University, College of Medicine and Public Health
<b>REVIEW RETURNED</b>	02-Feb-2021

<b>GENERAL COMMENTS</b>	<p>Thank you for inviting me to review this methods paper. This scoping review plans to synthesis data on an important topic related to the intersection of multiple stigmas and discrimination among sexual minorities in sub-Saharan Africa. In general, this scoping review methods paper adheres closely with the prescribed methods for this type of review and provides most of the information required. However, there is more detail required on the synthesis of data (see comments below). I also note some grammatical errors throughout.</p> <p>Abstract:</p>
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	<p>The journal specifies abstracts to be under 300 words. Could the authors please check the word length of the abstract conforms with these requirements.  P5, L41: Replace 'strengths' with 'strength'.  P5, L48: Delete 'its'.</p> <p>Introduction:  P6, L34: Please provide references to support the statement "... drawn contrary conclusions,"  P6, L45: Please check the grammar of the sentence: "... issues such as (e.g. inadequate ..."  P7, L17: Please provide references for "... experience multiple stigmas."  P7,L22: Please provide references for "... on wellbeing and health."  P7, L22: Please check with the editors on the use of "/" in sentences. It could be recommended to remove these and restructure sentences to use commas instead. Similarly, the use of "(s)" at the end of words. This is purely stylistic and I defer to the journal editors.  P7, L43: Delete ", and others". Please provide references for this sentence.  P7, L38: Remove the comma after "socially".</p> <p>Methods:  P9, L17: Please check punctuation in this sentence.  P9, L31: This sentence needs reworking. I suggest: "The study must also present primary or secondary data involving MSM or WSW and be conducted in one or more sub-Saharan African countries."  P9, L52: Delete "that".  P11, L22: Sentence structure issue. I suggest updating to: "... unidentified by the team through other search strategies."  P12, L13: Sentence structure issue. Replace "if any" with "and".  P12, L40: Can the authors expand on why they are planning to extract data from papers reporting single stigma, when this is outside the scope of the review? I suggest this is not required to address the aim of this scoping review.  P13, L10: Can the authors please provide more detail of how the extracted data will be synthesised? What approaches will be applied, software to be used, theoretical frameworks used to guide the analysis etc?  Also, the authors provide the PRISMA-P reporting checklist in a table, however, it would be more appropriate to provide the PRISMA-ScR checklist. Could the authors please revise and provide?  Also, the authors should provide details of how they will critically appraise the selected papers identified for data extraction. As stated by Tricco et al "The process of systematically examining research evidence to assess its validity, results, and relevance before using it to inform a decision."  P13, L28: This sentence needs reworking. I suggest: "... scope of, and gaps in, existing ... this study is to investigate the impacts ..."</p> <p>Discussion:  P13, L40: This sentence needs reworking. I suggest: "Sexual minorities, including MSM and WSW, experience various ..."  P14, L8: There are grammar and tense issues throughout this sentence. Please review.  P14, L27: Replace "generated" with "generates".  P14, Line 34: Delete "- IRB".</p>
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## VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

### Reviewer: 1

Comments to the Author:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this protocol. This scoping review described will provide much needed knowledge about the ways intersecting stigmas affect marginalized populations who are highly impacted by HIV. I recommend acceptance of this manuscript. Though, there is one important suggestion I would like to make. At several points in the text (e.g. Abstract, page 2, lines 24-30; page 5, lines 28-40), I felt that one piece of intersectional theory should be made more explicit - that oppressions (and stigmas) are overlapping and co-occurring, yes, but they are also co-constitutive. While this last point is clear in some of the discussion of extant literature, it seems to get lost in some places and it reads as though, for example, MSM are experiencing "intersectional stigma with regards to same-sex attraction, gender-non-conforming behaviour, actual or perceived HIV status, and others" (p.5), not that being a gay or bisexual man actually changes what it means to have HIV in the eyes of others. This is a very small, but important edit, I believe. Though the manuscript is excellently written and is worthy of publication.

### Response to reviewer 1

*Thank you for your feedback. We have added discussion of the co-constitutive and synergistic nature of intersectional stigma in the sections that you have highlighted.*

### Reviewer: 2

Comments to the Author:

Thank you for inviting me to review this methods paper. This scoping review plans to synthesis data on an important topic related to the intersection of multiple stigmas and discrimination among sexual minorities in sub-Saharan Africa. In general, this scoping review methods paper adheres closely with the prescribed methods for this type of review and provides most of the information required. However, there is more detail required on the synthesis of data (see comments below). I also note some grammatical errors throughout.

Abstract:

The journal specifies abstracts to be under 300 words. Could the authors please check the word length of the abstract conforms with these requirements.

*DONE*

P5, L41: Replace 'strengths' with 'strength'.

*DONE*

P5, L48: Delete 'its'.

*DONE*

Introduction:

P6, L34: Please provide references to support the statement "... drawn contrary conclusions,"

*DONE*

P6, L45: Please check the grammar of the sentence: "... issues such as (e.g. inadequate ..."

*DONE*

P7, L17: Please provide references for "... experience multiple stigmas."

*DONE*

P7,L22: Please provide references for "... on wellbeing and health."

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P7, L22: Please check with the editors on the use of "/" in sentences. It could be recommended to remove these and restructure sentences to use commas instead. Similarly, the use of "(s)" at the end of words. This is purely stylistic and I defer to the journal editors.

*DONE*

P7, L43: Delete ", and others". Please provide references for this sentence.

*DONE*

P7, L38: Remove the comma after "socially".

*DONE*

Methods:

P9, L17: Please check punctuation in this sentence.

*DONE*

P9, L31: This sentence needs reworking. I suggest: "The study must also present primary or secondary data involving MSM or WSW and be conducted in one or more sub-Saharan African countries."

*DONE*

P9, L52: Delete "that".

*DONE*

P11, L22: Sentence structure issue. I suggest updating to: "... unidentified by the team through other search strategies."

*DONE*

P12, L13: Sentence structure issue. Replace "if any" with "and".

*DONE*

P12, L40: Can the authors expand on why they are planning to extract data from papers reporting single stigma, when this is outside the scope of the review? I suggest this is not required to address the aim of this scoping review.

*DONE: As literature that evaluates stigma related to HIV prevention and care among MSM and WSW in an intersectional manner remains limited, in order to meet our primary objective of evaluating how stigma is discussed in HIV research, we will also include studies that examine a single stigma in our analysis. However, these single-stigma studies will not be included in the full data extraction process (only basic information and the type of stigma studied will be extracted) and will instead only be used to assess what proportion of the literature evaluates stigma intersectionally. (34). Keeping articles that discuss single stigmas will enable the team to quantify and compare studies on intersectional stigma with those on individual stigmas.*

P13, L10: Can the authors please provide more detail of how the extracted data will be synthesised? What approaches will be applied, software to be used, theoretical frameworks used to guide the analysis etc?

*DONE: The approach/theoretical framework applied will be intersectionality and intersectional stigma. The software used as discussed in the Methods and Analysis section will be Covidence and Google Forms. The PRISMA-ScR will guide the analysis.*

Also, the authors provide the PRISMA-P reporting checklist in a table, however, it would be more appropriate to provide the PRISMA-ScR checklist. Could the authors please revise and provide?

*DONE: PRISMA ScR Checklist provided*

Also, the authors should provide details of how they will critically appraise the selected papers identified for data extraction. As stated by Tricco et al “The process of systematically examining research evidence to assess its validity, results, and relevance before using it to inform a decision.”

*NOT DONE: According to the PRISMA ScR guidelines, critical appraisal is not required for scoping reviews.*

P13, L28: This sentence needs reworking. I suggest: “... scope of, and gaps in, existing ... this study is to investigate the impacts ...”

*DONE*

Discussion:

P13, L40: This sentence needs reworking. I suggest: “Sexual minorities, including MSM and WSW, experience various ...”

*DONE*

P14, L8: There are grammar and tense issues throughout this sentence. Please review.

*DONE*

P14, L27: Replace “generated” with “generates”.

*DONE*

P14, Line 34: Delete “- IRB”.

*DONE*

**Response to reviewer 2**

*Thank you for your feedback. We have addressed the revisions you have suggested.*