

# PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PrEP)

## BEST PRACTICES REVIEW METHODS

The Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Best Practices review is conducted using well-established systematic procedures for searching and reviewing the intervention research literature. Identified Evidence-Based interventions (EBIs) or Evidence-Informed interventions (EIs) support biomedical tools (i.e., PrEP) by promoting awareness, increasing delivery and use, and improving adherence of PrEP. The information presented below describes the search strategy for identifying relevant articles, study eligibility criteria for inclusion in the review, and study coding procedures for reviewing the quality of the evidence. A detailed overview of the Prevention Research Synthesis (PRS) Project search strategy is available in the article [\*Developing a comprehensive search strategy for evidence based systematic reviews\*](#) in the open access journal *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*.

### PrEP Search Strategy

Using a comprehensive and systematic search strategy, PRS developed a cumulative database of the HIV and AIDS prevention research literature. This cumulative database is continually updated using automated searches conducted annually and manual searches conducted quarterly.

The automated search component involves searching the following electronic bibliographic databases: CAB Global Health, CINAHL, EMBASE, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, and Sociological abstracts for articles focusing on PrEP for HIV.

The manual search consists of regularly reviewing journals (see list below) to identify articles not yet indexed in the electronic databases. These journals are inclusive across the five additional PRS reviews that are currently being conducted (i.e., Risk Reduction [RR]; Medication Adherence [MA]; Overview of Reviews Project [ORP]; Linkage to, Retention in, and Re-engagement in HIV Care [LRC]; and Structural Interventions [SI]). Currently, the journal list totals 28 titles and is modified annually based on which journals yield the most relevant citations for each review. Quarterly, team members screen the most recent issues of these journals to locate newly published relevant articles. In addition, team members also examine the reference lists of published articles, HIV/AIDS Internet listservs, and unpublished manuscripts that have been submitted to PRS by study authors.

A search is done within the PRS cumulative database for each eligible intervention study to identify all articles reporting descriptive or outcome data from the same intervention. All articles describing the same intervention study are considered linked reports and are included in the review process for that study; one article is determined to be the index article. Additional details about these search strategies and procedures can be obtained by [contacting PRS](#).

## PrEP Study Eligibility

Once articles are identified through the systematic search, they are screened to determine eligibility for the PRS PrEP Best Practices review. To be included in this review, studies **must meet each** of the following inclusion criteria:

- Published or accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal
- Report any relevant PrEP biological or behavioral outcome data (i.e., screening for PrEP eligibility and referring to PrEP services, linkage to PrEP care, PrEP initiation/uptake, PrEP use, PrEP medication adherence or persistence, PrEP drug levels, retention in PrEP care, HIV incidence, PrEP prescribing behavior, PrEP utilization among healthcare systems and communities) from a PrEP-related intervention
- Use relevant measures (i.e., PrEP medical visits documented in medical or agency records or surveillance reports; self-reports, PrEP drug level assays as proxies for PrEP adherence) for PrEP outcomes

AND

- Conducted in the United States or a U.S. territory and has a comparison arm or, if a one-group study design, has pre-post intervention data, or
- Conducted outside of the United States and is a randomized controlled trial

Interventions **not** currently included in the review are as follows:

- Interventions that do not have pre-intervention (baseline) data for one-group study designs
- Interventions establishing PrEP biomedical treatment efficacy or PrEP treatment regimens

## PrEP Study Coding Procedures

Pairs of trained content analysts independently screen each study to determine eligibility based on PrEP outcome relevance and measurement. Eligible studies are then evaluated on study design to determine whether the PRS PrEP evidence-based or evidence-informed criteria will be used to evaluate the study. Pairs then independently evaluate each study using the appropriate set of criteria. This coding is done for all linked articles reporting information on the same intervention study. Discrepancies between coder pairs are reconciled via discussion and, if needed, a senior coder is consulted.

If the study does not report critical information needed to determine whether an intervention meets criteria for being classified as evidence-based or evidence-informed, the team contacts the principal investigator of the study to obtain the missing information or seek additional clarification. The final evaluation determination for each study is reached by team consensus.

## PRS Manual Search Journal List\* (n = 28)

AIDS	JAIDS Journ of Acq Immune Deficiency Syndromes
AIDS and Behavior	Journal of HIV/AIDS & Social Services
AIDS Care	Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment
AIDS Education and Prevention	Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
AIDS Patient Care and STDs	Journal of the International AIDS Society
American Journal of Public Health	Lancet HIV
BMC Infectious Diseases	PLoS Medicine
BMJ Open	PLoS ONE
Clinical Infectious Diseases	Public Health Reports
Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews	Sexual Health
Current HIV/AIDS Reports	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
Current Opinion in HIV and AIDS	Sexually Transmitted Infections
HIV Medicine	Systematic Reviews
International Journal of STD & AIDS	Tropical Medicine & International Health

\*Last updated September 2020

**Additional PrEP chapter materials including chapter background and EBI/EI criteria [can be found here](#). Additional details about the PrEP Chapter or the [Prevention Research Synthesis \(PRS\) Project](#) can be obtained by [contacting PRS](#).**

