

# HIV RISK REDUCTION (RR) EFFICACY REVIEW METHODS

The [Prevention Research Synthesis \(PRS\) Project](#) efficacy review process for identifying HIV **Risk Reduction (RR)** evidence-based behavioral interventions is conducted using well-established systematic procedures for searching and reviewing the intervention research literature. The information presented below describes the RR search strategy for identifying relevant articles, RR study eligibility criteria for inclusion in the review, and RR study coding procedures for reviewing the quality of the evidence. A detailed overview of the PRS 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*.

Once included in the review, the [PRS RR efficacy criteria](#) are used to determine if an HIV risk reduction intervention is best-evidence or good-evidence.

## RR Search Strategy

Using a comprehensive and systematic search strategy, PRS developed a cumulative database of the HIV, AIDS, and STD prevention research literature. This cumulative database is continually updated using both automated and manual search components.

The automated search component involves the annual search of four electronic bibliographic databases (EMBASE, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, and Sociological Abstracts). The PRS project also conducted a systematic search of the AIDSLINE database prior to its discontinuation in December 2000. These searches identify articles that focus on HIV/AIDS or STD behavioral prevention.

The manual search consists of regularly reviewing journals (see below) to identify articles not yet indexed in the electronic databases. These journals are inclusive across the four PRS reviews that are currently being conducted (i.e., Linkage to, Retention in, and Re-engagement in HIV Care (LRC), Risk Reduction (RR), Medication Adherence (MA), and the Overview of Reviews Project (ORP)). As of January 2016, the journal list totals 52 titles. The list of journals changes according to published reports found through the PRS process. Each year the PRS database is surveyed to determine which journals retrieve the most relevant citations for each review. The hand search list of journals is modified to reflect recent publishing trends, and therefore the list of journals may change on a year-to-year basis. Quarterly, PRS team members screen all issues of the journals published within the 3 previous months to locate relevant articles. In addition, PRS also examines the reference lists of published articles, HIV/AIDS Internet listservs, and unpublished manuscripts submitted by study authors.

For each eligible intervention study, the PRS cumulative database is searched 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. Additional details about these search strategies and procedures can be obtained by [contacting PRS](#).

## RR Study Eligibility

Once articles are identified through the systematic search, they are screened to determine eligibility for the PRS individual- and group-, or community-level intervention efficacy review. To be included in the review, studies must meet **each** of the following inclusion criteria:

- Focus on an HIV, AIDS, or STD behavioral intervention
- Outcome evaluation with a comparison arm
- Published or accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal
- Conducted in the United States or a U.S. territory
- Focus on a target population of people living with HIV (PLWH), men who have sex with men (MSM), or transgender persons\* (beginning with publications dated 2015 or later)
- Report any of the following relevant outcome data:
  - Behaviors directly impacting HIV risk:
    - Sex risk behaviors (e.g., abstinence, mutual monogamy, number of sex partners, negotiation of safer sex, condom use, refusal to have unsafe sex)
    - Drug injection behaviors (e.g., frequency of injection drug use, needle sharing)
  - Biologic measures of HIV or other STD infections (e.g., prevalence or incidence measures of hepatitis, HIV, or other STDs)

Interventions that focus on the following types of prevention are **not** currently included in the PRS RR efficacy review:

- Substance abuse treatment only
- Needle exchange
- HIV counseling and testing only
- Partner counseling and referral services
- Policy changes
- School-based curricula

**\*Interventions with other target populations that meet all other criteria may be evaluated at author's request based on PRS staff capacity and author's willingness to provide all information required to complete the evaluation.**

## RR Study Coding Procedures

Pairs of trained content analysts independently code each eligible study with PRS RR efficacy criteria for each eligible study. This coding includes all linked articles reporting information on the same intervention study. All discrepancies between coder pairs are reconciled.

If the study does not report critical information needed to determine intervention efficacy, the PRS team contacts the principal investigator of the study to obtain the missing information or to seek additional clarification. The final efficacy determination for each study is reached by PRS team consensus.

## PRS Manual Search Journal List (n = 52)

Addiction	International Journal of STD & AIDS
AIDS	JAIDS Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Synd
AIDS and Behavior	JAMA Journal of the American Medical Association
AIDS Care	JBI Database of SR & Implementation Reports
AIDS Education and Prevention	Journal of Adolescent Health
AIDS Patient Care and STDs	Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology
AIDS Reviews	Journal of Health Care for the Poor & Underserved
American Journal of Public Health	Journal of HIV/AIDS & Social Sciences
Annals of Behavioral Medicine	Journal of Infectious Diseases
Annals of Emergency Medicine	Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment
BMC Health Services Research	Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
BMC Infectious Diseases	Journal of the International AIDS Society
BMC Public Health	Journal of the International Association of Providers in AIDS Care
BMJ	Lancet
Clinical Infectious Diseases	Lancet Infectious Diseases
Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews	Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report
Cognitive and Behavioral Practice	Perspectives on Sexual & Reproductive Health
Current HIV/AIDS Reports	PLoS Medicine
Current HIV Research	PLoS ONE
Current Opinion in HIV and AIDS	Public Health Reports
Current Opinion in Infectious Diseases	Sexual Health
Drug and Alcohol Dependence	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
Health Education & Behavior	Sexually Transmitted Infections
Health Education Research	Systematic Reviews
Health Psychology	Tropical Medicine & International Health
HIV Clinical Trials	
HIV Medicine	

**Additional details about the Risk Reduction Chapter or the [Prevention Research Synthesis \(PRS\) Project](#) can be obtained by [contacting PRS](#).**

