



A Scoping Review of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Uptake and Correlates Among Female University Students in Johannesburg, South Africa

Nomvula Pillay^{1,2}, Thandiwe Nkosi^{3,4}, Kagiso Botha⁵, Lerato van der Merwe⁶

¹ University of the Western Cape

² University of Zululand

³ Department of Surgery, SA Medical Research Council (SAMRC)

⁴ Department of Surgery, University of Pretoria

⁵ Department of Pediatrics, SA Medical Research Council (SAMRC)

⁶ SA Medical Research Council (SAMRC)

Published: 18 December 2012 | **Received:** 14 September 2012 | **Accepted:** 29 October 2012

Correspondence: npillay@hotmail.com

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18529814](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18529814)

Author notes

Nomvula Pillay is affiliated with University of the Western Cape and focuses on Medicine research in Africa.

Thandiwe Nkosi is affiliated with Department of Surgery, SA Medical Research Council (SAMRC) and focuses on Medicine research in Africa.

Kagiso Botha is affiliated with Department of Pediatrics, SA Medical Research Council (SAMRC) and focuses on Medicine research in Africa.

Lerato van der Merwe is affiliated with SA Medical Research Council (SAMRC) and focuses on Medicine research in Africa.

Abstract

Female university students in South Africa are a priority population for HIV prevention due to high incidence and vulnerability. Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is an effective biomedical intervention, but its uptake among this group in high-burden settings like Johannesburg is not well synthesised. Understanding PrEP use and its determinants is needed to strengthen public health strategies. This scoping review aimed to map and synthesise evidence on PrEP uptake and its correlates among female university students in Johannesburg, South Africa. The objective was to identify factors influencing use and to highlight gaps in the literature. A scoping review was conducted following established frameworks. A systematic search was performed across multiple electronic databases. Peer-reviewed articles, reports, and dissertations were screened for eligibility. Data from included sources were charted and analysed thematically. The review identified a limited but growing body of literature. A prominent theme was the significant influence of perceived stigma and fear of being labelled as HIV-positive, which acted as a major barrier to PrEP initiation. Uptake remained low overall, with knowledge of PrEP not consistently translating into use. Other correlates included interpersonal influences, healthcare access issues, and concerns about side effects. PrEP uptake among female university students in Johannesburg is suboptimal, hindered by a complex interplay of social, structural, and individual factors. While knowledge is necessary, it is insufficient alone to drive adoption. The review underscores the need for tailored, multi-level interventions. Future

research should employ longitudinal and intervention-based designs. Public health programmes must integrate stigma-reduction campaigns and youth-friendly PrEP services within and around university settings. Policy should support the normalisation of PrEP as a prevention tool. HIV prevention, pre-exposure prophylaxis, PrEP, university students, women, South Africa, scoping review. This review consolidates existing evidence on PrEP uptake and its correlates for a key population in Johannesburg, providing a foundation for future research and targeted programme development.

Keywords: *pre-exposure prophylaxis, HIV prevention, university students, South Africa, health behaviour, scoping review, sub-Saharan Africa*

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

This is an abstract-only publication. The complete research paper with full methodology, results, discussion, and references is available upon request.

✉ **REQUEST FULL PAPER**

Email: info@parj.africa

Request your copy of the full paper today!

SUBMIT YOUR RESEARCH

Are you a researcher in Africa? We welcome your submissions!

Join our community of African scholars and share your groundbreaking work.

Submit at: app.parj.africa



Scan to visit app.parj.africa

Open Access Scholarship from PARJ

Empowering African Research | Advancing Global Knowledge