

HIV and **Stigma** in the Indian Health Care System: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

- India ranks third in the largest number of HIV cases¹
- Stigma is multifaceted and cyclical in nature
- Stigma within the health care system actors can impact timely prevention and treatment
- A systematic review of the published literature in ProQuest, PsychInfo and PubMed revealed significant stigma persists in the health care system
- Mistreatment and discrimination impacts the quality of care → increases avoidance of utilizing the health care system → increases the transmission and mortality due to HIV/AIDS²

Research question

What are the underlying mechanisms of stigma in the health care system in India? Do they pose a significant barrier to prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS?

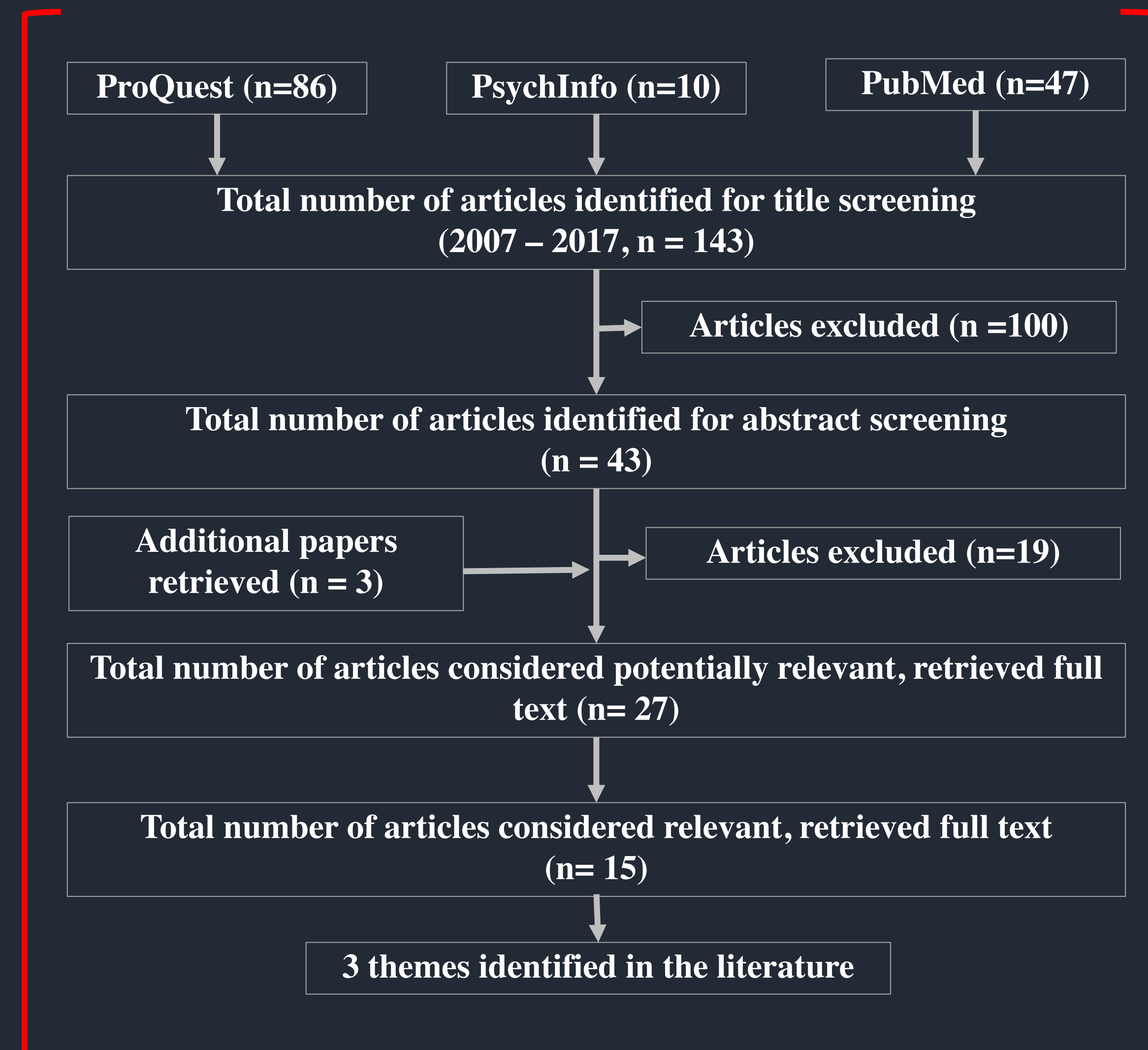
Stigma refers to negative attitudes (prejudice) and negative behavior (discrimination) towards people³

- Vicarious stigma
- Enacted stigma
- Internalized stigma



4

Methods



Results

1. Mistreatment by staff

- From derogatory labelling to refusal of treatment
- Leads to avoidance of testing, reporting symptoms, and accessing treatment⁵⁻¹⁸



20

2. Discrimination in policies and procedures

- Bureaucratic policies discriminate against intravenous drug users (IDU), homeless, and transgender populations
- Lack of funding and confidentiality
- Inadequate care procedures⁵⁻¹⁸

3. Lack of cultural sensitivity

- Inadequate counselling for marginalized groups such as transgender populations, sex workers, men who have sex with men and IDUs
- Insensitive to an individual's sexual needs or desire to start a family⁵⁻¹⁸

Recommendations

1. Integrate policies and programs to reduce stigma among health care workers
2. Improve funding for resources to remove barriers that impede the quality of care
3. Encourage quality of care through a human rights lens, particularly for underserved populations
4. Integrate developmental evaluative framework within HIV programs in India → generate learnings

59% of doctors and 61% of nurses reported to intentionally discriminate against HIV positive patients⁵

50% of women did not want to receive HIV care due to bad memories of mistreatment by health care providers⁶

19