



# Health Information Seeking of LGBTQ People: A Scoping Review



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## KEY FINDINGS

- Primary info sources are media and internet. Very few studies even consider the role of libraries as info sources.
- The literature is inadequate, emphasising MSM over lesbians, bisexual women and trans\* people
- Health pros lack knowledge of LGBTQ-specific issues and are often unwilling to address this leading to a lack of trust among patients.
- Oversaturation of articles in AIDS/HIV. The strong association between LGBTQ health and HIV/AIDS is a disincentive to info-seeking on other health matters.
- Geography matters. MSM in non-Western countries have less knowledge of HIV due to stigma and lack of public info.

## Methods

We conducted a scoping review to explore the role of health librarians in the health information seeking process of LGBTQ people, as this is popular and rapidly emerging methodology for exploratory studies.

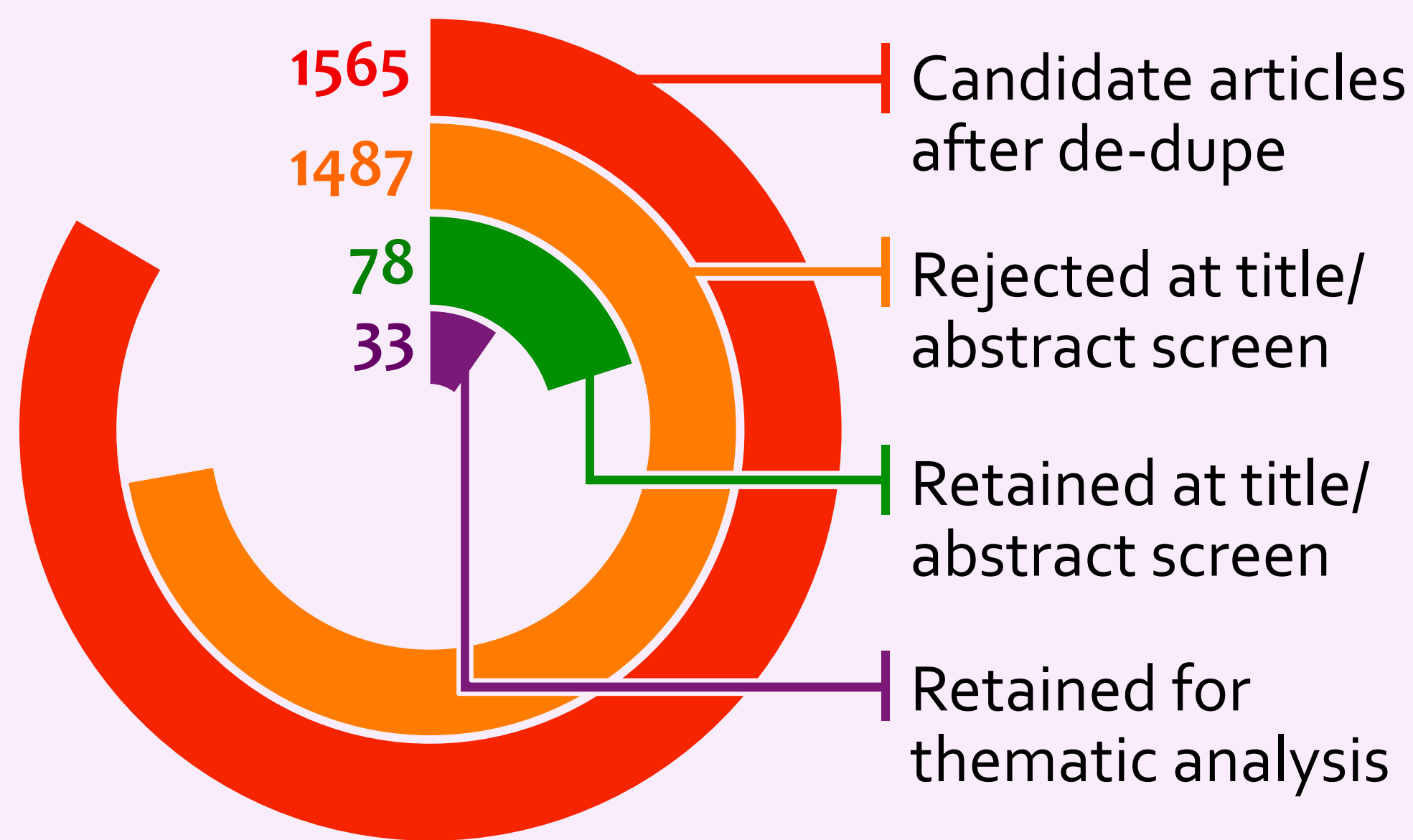
We followed Arksey & O'Malley's 5-step framework [1], as amended by Levac et al. [2].

### Identification of studies

We searched PubMed, Embase, CINAHL, PubMed, Ovid MEDLINE®, LISA and LISTA, limiting results to publications published between January 1996 and August 2015.

Inclusion criteria applied:

- (information-seeking behaviour) OR (interaction with librarians); AND
- LGBTQ health information



After conducting title/abstract and full-text screening on articles retrieved, we extracted data from relevant articles using Google Sheets. We then identified relevant themes by using the index article approach [3], using one highly relevant "index" article [4] as a starting point. Interim results in this poster are drawn from 15 articles

## Discussion

While it is widely understood that there are unique health issues facing LGBTQ people [5], the literature is inadequate regarding the health issues themselves and on information seeking behaviours within these groups. This is particularly true for lesbians, bisexual women, trans\*, and other gender non-conforming people who do not have sex with men. We recognize that it is important that there is an extensive breadth of literature concerning MSM as they are historically and statistically most at risk for HIV infection; however, there are a variety of other health needs facing these populations that cumulatively require

further attention. We recommend the following areas for further discussion/scholarship:

- How do non-MSM populations seek health information?
- How do LGBTQ people use the internet for health information seeking for a wide range of non-HIV/AIDS related concerns?
- How can health librarians assist clinicians in accessing LGBTQ health information?

**LIMITATION:** Findings are based on a small number of studies and can only be considered illustrative of the range of issues needing further study in this area.

## What we have found so far

We extracted and analyzed data from 15 articles, using the findings from Rose and Friedman [4] relating to the sources of information and barriers to information seeking as an index and framework for analysis. The literature supports the findings of Rose and Friedman and also covers a number of additional areas of research related to the nature of information needs and the varying levels of health information knowledge in this community.

### Barriers to information



#### (Lack of) Trust, Disclosure:

- Stigma and bias major barrier to access
- This leads many to use internet for info
- LGBTQ health associated with whiteness
- Youth cannot believe everything in blogs



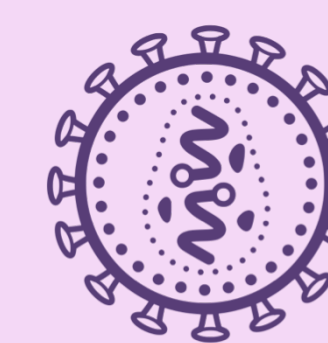
#### Discomfort/Embarrassment

- Many hide orientation. Reports from China, Vietnam
- Stigma key barrier at college age when may be coming out
- Many MSM not willing to help others
- Continuing huge stigma for HIV+ people



#### Lack of LGBTQ knowledge

- Poor education of health care pros
- Lack of non-MSM literature
- Media focusses on HIV/STI-testing
- Many youth unaware of "safe sex"
- Older LGBTQ feel better informed



#### Association with HIV/AIDS

- HIV/AIDS considered "gay" disease, assumption that info-seeker is gay.
- Additional stigma



#### Lack of +ve LGBTQ images

- A particular problem for MSM of colour
- 51% get info from public campaigns



#### Lack of targetted info

- Need for info using targetted and inclusive language
- Much info ignores divide between cultural background and orientation

### Information sources



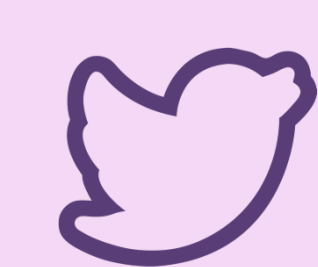
#### Health Professionals

- Focus on heterosexism
- 80% of LGBTQ talk about AIDS, 62% about sex with men
- Few opportunities to discuss sexual health beyond STI/HIV testing
- Many youth unwilling to discuss sexuality
- HIV/AIDS info for gay Latino and African-American men often misleading.



#### Sexual Partners

- 51.5% get health info from partners.
- Many young LGBTQ get info online e.g. chat rooms and pornography.
- Many ask their friend network for help.



#### Media

- Main sources: TV (58.6%), Web (48.7%)
- Popular: search engine (77%), LGBTQ sites (68%), health sites (56%)
- Info gap: HIV+ people compared to HIV-people with chronic disease



#### Schools

- Schools do not provide adequate info or discussion opportunities for YMSM
- Racial disparities



#### Parents:

- Some happy to discuss concerns with parents, although this is harder for MSM

### Role of Librarians



#### As Information Source

- Increased frequency of LGBTQ health pros seeking info from a librarian if librarian is out LGBTQ



#### Improving our Service

- Signalling openness through display of LGBTQ specific materials and events
- Equal access statements
- Links on website to targeted info
- Provide confidential reference settings and/or "Safe Spaces"



#### Upskilling

- Collaboration with interested health pros to produce training for librarians
- CE at conferences and other events

## References

- [1] Arksey H, O'Malley L. Scoping studies: towards a methodological framework. Int J Soc Res Methodol. 2005;8(1):19-32.
- [2] Levac D, Colquhoun H, O'Brien KK. Scoping studies: advancing the methodology. Implement Sci. 2010;5:69.
- [3] Booth A, Papaioannou D, Sutton A. Systematic Approaches to a Successful Literature Review. London, UK: SAGE Publications Ltd; 2012.
- [4] Rose I, Friedman D. We need health information too: A systematic review of studies examining the health information seeking and communication practices of sexual minority youth. Health Ed J. 2012;72(4):417-430.
- [5] Morris, M, Hawkins, B. Towards a new specialization in health librarianship: LGBTQ health. J Can Health Lib Assoc. 2016;37(1):20-23.

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