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**ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**  
  
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**Amendments** - This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 02 April 2024 and was last updated on 02 April 2024.

INTRODUCTION

**Review question / Objective** Objective: To systematically examine the LGBTQ and gender-based violence (GBV). Review question: What are the current knowledge and knowledge deficits of LGBTQ and gender-based violence (GBV)?

**Rationale** Gender-based violence (GBV) is a pervasive global issue, affecting individuals across diverse backgrounds and identities. However, research on GBV has often overlooked the unique experiences of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) individuals, despite evidence suggesting that they are at heightened risk of experiencing violence due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression. This study aims to address this gap by focusing specifically on LGBTQ and GBV, exploring its

prevalence, forms, contributing factors, and impacts. The rationale can be summarise in the following:  
1. Addressing Underrepresentation: Existing research on GBV predominantly focuses on heterosexual, cisgender individuals, neglecting the experiences of LGBTQ individuals. By centering on LGBTQ-specific GBV, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the unique challenges faced by this marginalized population.  
2. Unique Experiences and Forms of Violence: LGBTQ individuals often encounter forms of violence that are distinct from those experienced by their heterosexual, cisgender counterparts. These may include intimate partner violence, family rejection, hate crimes, and discrimination in healthcare and employment settings. Understanding these distinct forms of violence is crucial for developing targeted interventions and support services.

3. Intersectionality: LGBTQ individuals belong to diverse communities with intersecting identities, such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and disability. Intersectionality shapes their experiences of violence, influencing factors such as access to resources, social support, and experiences of discrimination. This study seeks to explore how intersecting identities intersect with LGBTQ identity to exacerbate or mitigate risks of GBV.

4. Social Impacts: GBV can have profound psychological, social, and economic consequences for survivors. LGBTQ individuals may face additional challenges, such as internalized homophobia, transphobia, and stigma, which can exacerbate the trauma of violence. Investigating the impacts of LGBTQ-specific GBV can inform the development of trauma-informed interventions and support services tailored to the needs of this population.

5. Structural and Systemic Factors: LGBTQ-specific GBV is often rooted in systemic inequalities, including legal discrimination, lack of protective legislation, and societal attitudes that perpetuate stigma and marginalization. Exploring these structural factors is essential for advocating for policy changes and social reforms aimed at preventing and addressing LGBTQ-specific GBV.

**Condition being studied** N/A.

## METHODS

**Search strategy** 1. Search terms used:

"Lesbian" OR "Gay" OR "Bisexual" OR "Transgender" OR "Queer" OR "Intersex" OR "Asexual" OR "Sexual orientation" OR "Cisgender" OR "Non-binary" OR "Transphobia" OR "LGBT" OR "LGBTQ" OR "LGBTQA+" OR "LGBTQ2" OR "LGBTQ2SIA+" OR "LGBTQIA2S+" OR "2SLGBTQI+" AND

AND

"Gender-based violence" OR "Gender violence" OR "Sexual abuse" OR "Physical abuse" OR "Emotional violence" OR "Sexual harassment" OR "Dating violence" OR "Intimate partner violence"

2. Databases used:

Web of Science, SCOPUS, Proquest, PubMed, Embase, EBSCOhost.

**Participant or population** The review will focus specifically on the LGBTQ community, which is also referred to in the literature under the following key terms: "LGBTQA+"; "LGBTQ2"; "LGBTQ2SIA+"; "LGBTQIA2S+"; "2SLGBTQI+".

**Intervention** N/A (the review will not evaluate any interventions).

**Comparator** N/A.

**Study designs to be included** Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA).

**Eligibility criteria** Additional inclusion criteria for all databases: English language; Articles. For Proquest database we use tag: "gender" to specify the scope and include the most relevant studies.

**Information sources** The information sources will be based on electronic databases: Web of Science, SCOPUS, Proquest, PubMed, Embase, EBSCOhost.

**Main outcome(s)** Based on the review results we will be able to identify LGBTQ-specific challenges related to gender-based violence.

We expect the study to generate knowledge in the following:

1.Social Contexts of Violence and Victimization among LGBTQ Individuals: the literature review will synthesize existing scholarship on the social contexts surrounding violence and victimization experienced by LGBTQ individuals. It will explore how various forms of violence, such as childhood physical and sexual abuse, school-based harassment, bullying, and family rejection, contribute to adverse mental health outcomes, including depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation and attempts, and increased sexual risk-taking behaviours. By examining the intersectionality of these experiences and their impacts on LGBTQ individuals' well-being, the review will generate knowledge about the complex interplay between social factors and health outcomes within this population.

2.Focus on Co-occurring Issues: the literature review will investigate the co-occurrence of structural violence (e.g., discrimination, stigma, racism, social exclusion, homelessness), mental health disorders (e.g., PTSD, depression), other health issues (e.g., HIV/AIDS), and gender-based violence (GBV) victimization among LGBTQ individuals. By synthesizing evidence from diverse sources, the review will elucidate how these interconnected factors exacerbate vulnerabilities and contribute to adverse health outcomes within the LGBTQ community. Understanding the multifaceted nature of these co-occurring issues is essential for developing comprehensive interventions and support services that address the complex needs of LGBTQ individuals.

3.Lifetime Experiences of Violence among Transgender Individuals: the literature review will examine the lifetime experiences of violence among transgender adults and youth, including

associations with substance use, attempted suicide, and mental health disorders such as PTSD, stress, anxiety, and depression. By synthesizing empirical findings, the review will shed light on the prevalence, patterns, and impacts of violence experienced by transgender individuals across the lifespan. This knowledge will inform efforts to develop trauma-informed care approaches and targeted interventions aimed at addressing the unique needs.

**Additional outcome(s)** The literature review will explore the prevalence, dynamics, and consequences of dating and intimate partner violence (DV/IPV) within LGBTQ relationships. It will examine various forms of DV/IPV, including physical, sexual, and psychological violence, as well as stalking, perpetrated by intimate partners or ex-partners. The review is expected to provide insights into the prevalence rates of DV/IPV among LGBTQ individuals and disparities based on gender identity and sexual orientation. This knowledge can potentially inform tailored prevention strategies and interventions to address DV/IPV within LGBTQ communities.

**Data management** All formal screening process will be done with the use of COVIDENCE. Covidence is a web-based systematic review management tool designed to streamline the process of conducting systematic reviews and meta-analyses. While Covidence primarily focuses on systematic reviews, its principles of data management can be broadly applicable to various research contexts. Here are the particulars of data management using Covidence:

1. **Importing Studies:** Covidence allows researchers to efficiently import search results from bibliographic databases such as PubMed, Embase, and Cochrane Library. After conducting a systematic search, researchers can upload search results directly into Covidence, where they can screen and manage studies throughout the review process.

2. **Screening and Selection:** Covidence facilitates the screening and selection process by providing a user-friendly interface for reviewers to assess the eligibility of studies based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Reviewers can independently screen studies, with discrepancies resolved through discussion or arbitration. Data management in this phase involves tracking the status of each study (e.g., included, excluded, or pending) and documenting reasons for exclusion.

3. **Data Extraction:** Once studies are selected for inclusion, Covidence supports data extraction by providing customizable forms for capturing relevant study characteristics, outcomes, and

findings. Researchers can collaboratively extract data from included studies, ensuring consistency and accuracy across reviewers. Data management involves organizing extracted data systematically, making it easier to analyze and synthesize findings later.

4. **Synthesis and Analysis:** After completing data extraction and risk of bias assessment, Covidence supports the synthesis and analysis of findings through features such as descriptive summaries, forest plots, and subgroup analyses. Researchers can visualize and interpret data within the platform, facilitating collaborative decision-making and hypothesis testing. Data management involves organizing synthesized findings and ensuring transparency in reporting methods and results.

5. **Reporting and Exporting:** Covidence allows researchers to generate reports and export data in various formats, including Microsoft Word, Excel, and RevMan. This enables researchers to prepare manuscripts, presentations, or supplementary materials using the compiled data and analysis. Data management in this phase involves finalizing the dataset, ensuring data integrity, and maintaining documentation for reproducibility and transparency.

#### **Quality assessment / Risk of bias analysis**

**Quality assessment:** there are two stages of the formal screening process. In the first stage, two reviewers use COVIDENCE to screen title and abstract independently. In the second stage, two reviewers screen full text of the articles selected based on stage 1.

**Risk of bias analysis:** Covidence includes tools for assessing the risk of bias in individual studies, particularly in systematic reviews. Researchers can use predefined risk of bias domains or customize assessment criteria based on the review's specific objectives. Data management in this phase involves documenting judgments about the risk of bias for each included study, which informs the interpretation of review findings. However, we will not apply a risk of bias assessment scale due to the fact that it is a social science based review and that uses primarily qualitative methodology to report results.

**Strategy of data synthesis** The following stages will be applied for the thematic data analysis:

1. **Data Organization:** After completing the screening and data extraction phases in Covidence, we will export the extracted data, including relevant study characteristics, outcomes, and findings, into a format compatible with qualitative analysis software (e.g., NVivo) or spreadsheets (e.g., Microsoft Excel). This data export ensures that all relevant information from

included studies is readily accessible for thematic analysis.

2. Familiarization with Data: We will begin thematic analysis by familiarizing ourselves with the data extracted from included studies. This involves reading through the extracted data to gain an understanding of the breadth and depth of the information collected.

3. Generating Initial Codes: Using qualitative analysis software, we will generate initial codes to systematically label and categorize segments of data relevant to the research question or objectives. Codes are typically descriptive labels assigned to specific concepts, themes, or patterns identified within the data. We will employ inductive coding approaches, allowing themes to emerge directly from the data.

4. Organizing Codes into Themes: we will organize the generated codes into broader thematic categories or themes based on similarities, differences, or relationships between codes. This process involves grouping related codes together to form overarching themes that capture key patterns or concepts present in the data. Themes should be coherent, internally consistent, and reflective of the content and context of the data.

5. Reviewing and Refining Themes: we will iteratively review and refine the identified themes through constant comparison and triangulation of data across included studies. This iterative process involves revisiting the coded data, comparing themes within and between studies, and refining the definitions and boundaries of themes as necessary to ensure accuracy and consistency.

6. Interpretation and Reporting: Once the thematic analysis is complete, we will interpret the meaning and significance of the identified themes in relation to the research question or objectives. This involves synthesizing the findings across studies, providing explanations or interpretations for the patterns observed, and considering their implications for theory, practice, or policy. We will then report the results of the thematic analysis in the systematic review, integrating the identified themes into the narrative synthesis or discussion section to contextualize and enrich the overall findings.

**Subgroup analysis** N/A.

**Sensitivity analysis** N/A (It is not health-focused systematic review).

**Language restriction** English.

**Country(ies) involved** Canada.

**Keywords** LGBTQ; gender-based violence; lesbian; gay; bisexual; transgender; queer.

**Dissemination plans** The study will result in a peer-reviewed publication.

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