

Identifying University-Based Approaches to Gender-Based Violence Prevention in Low and Middle-Income Countries: A Scoping Review Protocol

1. TITLE

University-Based Gender-Based Violence Prevention in LMICs

2. PROTOCOL INFORMATION

Maria Jose Baeza Robba, PhD^{1,2}; Michelle L. Munro-Kramer, PhD, CNM, FNP-BC, FAAN³; Gurpreet K. Rana, MLIS⁴; Marie Josee Mwiseneza, RN, MScN⁵; Moreoagae Bertha Randa, PhD, MPH⁶; Kwamena S. Dickson, PhD, Mphil⁷; Sarah Compton, PhD, MPH⁸; Olufunmilayo O. Banjo, PhD⁹; Ruth Owusu-Antwi, MBChB, MSc, FGCP¹⁰; Abigail Padi, PhD, Mphil, BA¹¹; Darnette M. Herron, MS¹²; Oluwatobiloba Shadare, BSc⁹; Abiola Afolabi, MSc⁹; Akanni Akinyemi, PhD, MSc⁹ & Tracy Zhandire, PhD¹³

¹Center for Global Health Equity University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI, USA

²Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile, Santiago, Chile.

³University of Michigan School of Nursing, Ann Arbor, MI, USA

⁴Taubman Health Sciences Library, University of Michigan, MI, USA

⁵University of Rwanda, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Remera, Kigali-Rwanda

⁶Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, School of Health Care Sciences, Department of Public Health, South Africa

⁷Department of Population and Health, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana

⁸Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Michigan Medical School

⁹Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Nigeria

¹⁰Behavioural Sciences Department, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana

¹¹Department of Accounting and Finance, Centre for Gender and Advocacy, Takoradi Technical University, Takoradi, Ghana

¹²University of Liberia Faculty Association, Monrovia, Liberia

¹³University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, College of Health Sciences, Durban, South Africa

3. BACKGROUND

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a prevalent public health issue. It is estimated that globally, 30% of women aged 15 years or older have experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner or sexual violence from a non-partner in their lifetime (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021). In low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), the prevalence of GBV is much higher than in high-income countries. In high-income countries, 22% of women have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) at least once in their lifetime, and 6%

reported having experienced IPV in the last year. Compared to 32% and 37% of women in middle- and low-income countries experiencing IPV in their lifetime and 12% and 22%, respectively, in the past year. Due to the severity of this problem, the elimination of GBV is part of the United Nations agenda, under 2030 sustainable development goals. However, the progress towards reducing violence against women and girls over the past two decades has been slow (United Nations [UN], 2023). In addition, research has shown that young individuals in LMIC are usually the most affected by GBV. A systematic review in Sub-Saharan Africa found that the prevalence of GBV in educational institutions went from 42.3% to 67.7% (Beyene et al., 2019).

The importance of addressing the high prevalence of GBV among LMIC educational institutions relies on the adverse health, social, and economic outcomes of all forms of GBV on the individual (Campbell et al., 2002; Garcia Moreno, 2013; Vyas et al., 2023) and also on the specific consequences that GBV has for this group, in terms of interrupting education, lower grades, a higher likelihood of dropping out of school, and disengagement (Banyard et al., 2020). It is crucial to enhance awareness and assessment of GBV in educational institutions since higher education plays a significant role in nurturing leadership qualities, economic independence, gender equality, and policymaking. Transforming the culture related to GBV of educational institutions can yield positive outcomes for the entire system.

Past systematic reviews have examined interventions aimed at reducing gender-based violence (GBV) in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) at various ecological levels, including multilevel interventions (Sabri et al., 2023) and structural interventions (Bourey et al., 2015). A review focusing on interventions in universities located in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) is still needed. The benefits of addressing this gap are to gain a better understanding of what has been accomplished so far, identify best practices, and explore how these practices can be replicated in other LMIC settings (Farmer et al., 2023).

4. OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTION

Objective: The goal of this scoping review is to provide a comprehensive overview of university based GBV prevention interventions in LMICs. The review aims to identify and summarize the evidence available regarding GBV interventions in LMIC universities, including best practices, characteristics of interventions, targeted populations, and study types.

Review questions:

RQ1: What are the best practices for GBV prevention in LMIC university settings?

RQ2: What types of interventions have been employed to prevent GBV on university campuses?

RQ3: What specific populations have been targeted by these interventions?

RQ4: What is the nature of the available studies regarding their research purposes, designs, and methodologies?

PCC:

Population: University students or campuses

Context: Low- and Middle-Income countries

Concept: Gender Based Violence interventions

5. Eligibility Criteria:

Population: University students will be defined as any individual enrolled in a university program of study. University campuses will be defined as any institution of higher learning/ higher education providing facilities for teaching and research and authorized to grant academic degrees in the undergraduate division, conferring bachelor's degrees, and graduate division conferring master's degrees and doctorates (Merriam Webster, 2023).

Concept: Gender Based Violence interventions will be defined as any primary, secondary, and tertiary level intervention or policies targeted to decrease and prevent GBV in an institute of higher education.

Context: Any low- and middle-income country (LMIC) as defined by the World Bank (The World Bank, 2024) or terminology for LMIC settings (e.g. "developing country")

Types of evidence sources: Evidence sources can include any literature except for editorials, commentary, or opinion pieces. Primary sources will be excluded if already incorporated into an included evidence synthesis unless the data they contain is not otherwise reported in the evidence synthesis (Peters et al., 2022)

6. METHODS

The proposed scoping review will be conducted in accordance with the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) methodology for scoping reviews and the Preferred Reporting Items for Scoping Reviews Guidelines Scoping Review extension (PRISMA ScR; Tricco et al., 2018). The search will be conducted by a health sciences informationist (GKR). Initially, as a team we incorporated and discussed potential keywords that could be used to address the three search concepts: 1) university campuses or institutions of higher education or university students; 2) GBV reduction or prevention policies/interventions; and 3) LMIC setting. Subsequently, the health sciences informationist constructed a test search strategy in Ovid MEDLINE using representative controlled vocabulary and keywords. The Cochrane Effective Practice and Organisation of Care (EPOC) LMIC search filter (Cochrane EPOC Group, 2023) was used to represent LMIC search terms. This search strategy was used to identify

other relevant concepts, controlled vocabulary, and keywords. Initial search strategies were analyzed and refined in Ovid MEDLINE in order to develop a finalized search strategy.

This finalized search strategy will be used to translate the search strategy using appropriate terminology and search syntax in the other databases to be searched for this review. The finalized Ovid MEDLINE search strategy has been included in Appendix A.

The following bibliographic databases will be searched electronically: MEDLINE (via Ovid interface), EMBASE (via Embase.com), CINAHL (via EBSCOhost), PsycINFO (via EBSCOhost), Women's Studies International (via EBSCOhost), Cochrane Library (Wiley platform), Web of Science Core Collection (via Thompson Reuters), Scopus, and Global Health (via CABI).

Supplemental strategies: Grey literature will be explored.

Selection of studies: Studies emerged from the search will be exported to EndNote 21 (Clarivate Analytics) for processing and removal of duplicates and then exported to Covidence for assessment. The selection of studies will be based solely on whether they meet the protocol's inclusion criteria. A form will be developed and piloted by two authors on the first titles and abstracts. Any queries raised by the pilot will be reviewed and the form with Inclusion and exclusion criteria will be amended. Following the removal of duplicate studies, independent authors will use the finalized form to screen papers based on title and abstract. Those that do not meet the criteria will be removed. Thereafter, the full text of remaining studies will be obtained and screened by authors to determine eligibility. Disagreements in the eligibility of any study will be resolved in team meetings. The reasons for exclusion will be noted and the process of study selection will be documented in a flow diagram, as per PRISMA ScR (Tricco et al., 2018). A table of characteristics of included studies will be recorded. The review process is described in Figure 1.

7. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data extraction and charting: A form for data extraction will be developed and piloted by the authors on the first 5 studies. After piloting and reviewing any issues with the form, a finalized form will be developed and used to extract information for each full text article. If clarification is required, a third author will be approached. For each included study, the following data will be extracted (Table 1):

- Citation details: Author, year of publication
- Geographic Location(s)
- Type of Study (e.g., Randomized Control Trial, pre-post)
- Aims
- Intervention/ Program (e.g., education, bystander intervention)
- Target Population
- Who is delivering the program/ intervention
- Format of Delivery
- Outcomes
- Limitations

Data analysis and presentation: The narrative presentation of results will include descriptive statistics to give an overall presentation of the included studies (Sample sizes, methodologies, and studies design, years of publication, LMIC contexts). In addition, a narrative synthesis will be provided for the following categories: Study population, Intervention characteristics (e.g., Type of interventions, who is delivering), key findings, gaps in the research.

9. REFERENCES

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Structural, Community, Interpersonal, Individual, and Multiple Levels. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 24(5), 3170-3186. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380221126181>

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Figure 1

Review process

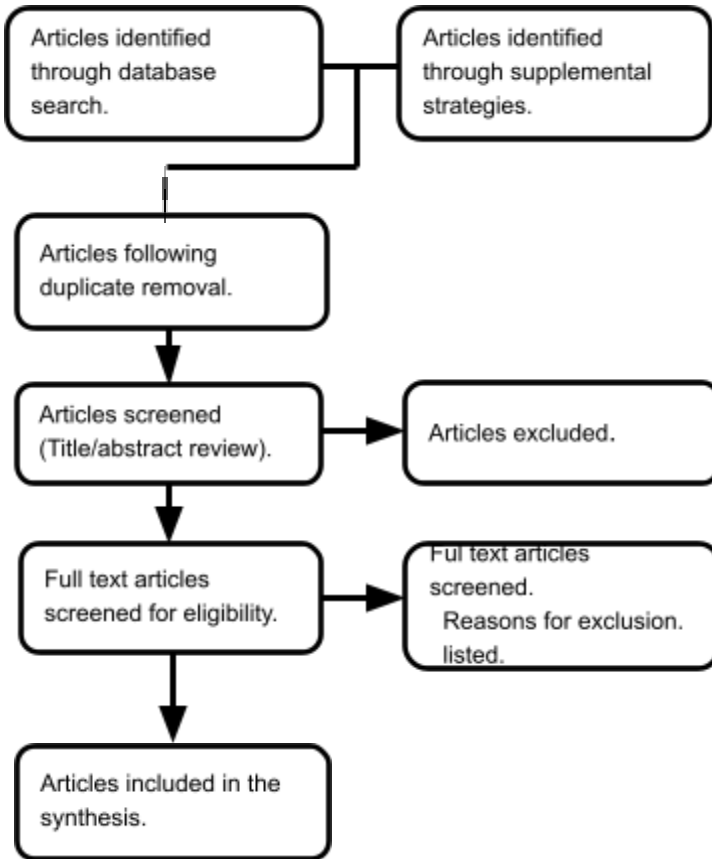


Table 1*Data extraction*

Parameter	Results
Title/ Author(s)	
Location	Region or Country(ies) where the intervention was developed
Type of Study	e.g., randomized controlled trials, non-randomized controlled trials, quasi-experimental studies, prospective cohort studies, retrospective cohort studies, case-control studies, cross-sectional studies, qualitative studies, mixed methods studies.
Aim of study	
Type of intervention	e.g., education, bystander intervention
Target population	e.g, all students, female students, faculty, staff.
Who is delivering	e.g., peer delivered, faculty, staff.
Format of delivery	e.g., in person, virtual, app based.
Results	Results of the study
Limitations	Limitations of the study

Appendix A

Ovid MEDLINE(R) ALL <1946 to February 08, 2024>

1 exp Universities/

2 exp Students/

3 ((universit* or college* or undergraduate or graduate or post-graduate) adj10 (student* or policy or policies or prevention or regulation* or practice* or intervention* or plan or planning or action* or program or programs or programme or programmes or guidance or guideline* or strategy or strategies or strategic or counsel* or administration or advoca* or engage*)).ti,ab.

4 (universit* or college* or undergraduate or graduate or "post-graduate").ti.

5 ("higher education" or "post-secondary" or postsecondary or "tertiary education" or "tertiary institution*" or collegiate or "upper secondary" or "superior education" or "educacion superior" or campus* or academia).ti,ab.

6 Policy Making/ or Student Health Services/ or "student health".ti,ab. or "school health".ti,ab. or "university health".ti,ab. or "college health".ti,ab.

7 (universit* or college* or undergraduate or graduate or "post-graduate").ti,ab.

8 6 and 7

9 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 8

10 exp Domestic Violence/ or Gender-Based Violence/ or Gun Violence/ or Intimate Partner Violence/ or Physical Abuse/ or Rape/ or Torture/ or Workplace Violence/ or Coercion/ or Circumcision, Female/ or exp Sex Offenses/ or Battered Women/ or "Adult Survivors of Child Abuse"/ or Enslaved Persons/ or Sex Preselection/ or Human Trafficking/ or Sex Work/

11 ("female genital mutilation" or "female genital cutting" or FGM or "domestic violence" or "intimate partner violence" or IPV or "spouse abuse" or "spousal abuse" or "spousal violence" or "marital violence" or "marital abuse" or "wife beating" or "battered women" or "partner abuse" or "wife abuse" or "wife batter*" or "forced sex*" or "marital rape" or enslavement or "violence against women" or (sex* adj3 violence) or (gender adj3 violence) or femicide or feminicide or "human traffick*" or "partner violence" or "family violence" or "honor killing" or "honour killing" or "acid attack\$" or "acid throwing" or "sex selective abortion" or "sex selection" or "missing women" or "missing girls" or "witch-craft" or "witchcraft" or "sex* abuse" or (sex* adj3 assault) or "sex* harassment" or (coerc* adj3 sex*) or "unwanted sex" or "unwanted touching" or (harmful adj3 practice*) or "child marriage" or "early marriage" or (sex* adj3 traffick*) or (sex* adj3 exploit*) or (forced adj3 prostitution) or "sex* slavery" or (relationship adj3 violence) or (relationship adj3 aggress*) or (sexual adj3 aggression) or "couple* violence" or "abused women" or rape\$ or "domestic abuse" or maltreatment).ti,ab.

12 10 or 11

13 (afghan* or africa* or albania* or algeria* or angola* or antigua* or barbuda* or argentin* or armenia* or aruba* or azerbaijan* or bahrain* or bangladesh* or bengal* or bangal* or barbados* or barbadian* or bajan or bajans or belarus* or belorus* or byelarus* or byelorus* or

belize* or benin* or dahomey or bhutan* or bolivia* or bosnia* or herzegovin* or botswan* or batswan* or bechuanaland* or brazil* or brasil* or bulgaria* or burkina* or burkinese* or upper volta* or burundi* or urundi* or cabo verde* or cape verde* or cambodia* or kampuchea* or khmer* or cameroon* or cameroun* or ubangi shari* or chad* or chile* or china* or chinese or colombia* or comoro* or comore* or comorian* or mayotte* or congo* or zaire* or costa rica* or "cote d'ivoir*" or "cote d'ivoir*" or cote divoir* or cote d ivoir* or ivory coast* or ivorian* or croatia* or cuba or cuban or cubans or "cuba's" or cyprus* or cyriot* or czech* or djibouti* or french somaliland* or dominica* or ecuador* or egypt* or united arab republic* or el salvador* or salvadoran* or guinea* or equatoguinea* or eritrea* or estonia* or eswatini* or swaziland* or swazi* or swati* or ethiopia* or fiji* or gabon* or gabonese* or gabonaise* or gambia* or ((georgia or georgian or georgians) not (atlanta or california or florida)) or ghana* or gibraltar* or greece* or greek* or grecian* or grenada* or grenadian* or guam* or guatemala* or guyana* or guiana* or guyanese* or haiti* or hispaniola* or hondura* or hungary* or hungarian* or india* or indonesia* or iran* or iraq* or isle of man* or jamaica* or jordan* or kazakh* or kenya* or karabati* or korea* or kosovo* or kosova* or kyrgyz* or kirgiz* or kirghiz* or laos or lao or laotian* or latvia* or lebanon* or lebanese* or lesotho* or lesothan* or lesothonian* or basutoland* or mosotho* or basotho* or liberia* or libya* or jamahiriya* or lithuania* or macedonia* or madagasca* or malagasy* or malawi* or nyasaland* or malaysia* or malay* federation or maldives* or maldivian* or indian ocean or mali or malian* or "mali's" or malta or maltese* or "malta's" or micronesia* or marshallese* or kiribati* or marshall island* or nauru or nauran or nauruans or "naurian's" or mariana or marianas or palau or paluan* or tuvalu* or mauritania* or mauritan* or mauritius* or mexico* or mexican* or moldova* or moldovia* or mongol* or montenegr* or morocco* or moroccan* or ifni or mozambique* or mozambican* or myanmar* or burma* or burmese or namibia* or nepal* or new caledonia* or netherlands antill* or nicaragua* or niger* or oman or omani or omanis or "oman's" or pakistan* or palestin* or gaza* or west bank* or panama* or paraguay* or peru or peruvian* or "peru's" or philippine* or philipine* or phillipine* or philippine* or filipino* or filipina* or poland* or polish or pole or poles or portugal* or portuguese or puerto ric* or romania* or russia* or ussr* or soviet* or rwanda* or rwandese or ruanda* or ruandese or samoa* or navigator island* or pacific island* or polynesia* or "sao tome and principe*" or saotomean* or santomean* or saudi arabia* or saudi or saudis or senegal* or serbia* or seychell* or sierra leone* or slovak* or sloven* or melanesia* or solomon island* or norfolk island* or somali* or sri lanka* or ceylon* or "saint kitts and nevis*" or "st kitts and nevis*" or kittian* or nevisian* or saint lucia* or st lucia* or saint vincent* or st vincent* or vincentian* or grenadine* or sudan* or surinam* or syria* or tajik* or tadjik* or tadjhik* or tanzania* or tanganyika* or thai* or timor leste* or east timor* or timorese* or togo or togoles* or "togo's" or tonga* or trinidad* or tobago* or tunisia* or turkiy* or turkey* or turk or turks or turkish or turkmen* or uganda* or ukrain* or uruguay* or uzbek* or vanuatu* or new hebrides* or venezuela* or vietnam* or viet nam* or yemen* or yugoslav* or zambia* or zimbabwe* or rhodesia* or arab* countr* or middle east* or global south or sahara* or subsahara* or magreb* or maghrib* or west indies* or caribbean* or central america* or latin america* or south america* or central asia* or north asia* or northern asia* or southeastern asia* or south eastern asia* or southeast asia* or south east asia* or west asia* or western asia* or east europe* or eastern europe* or developing countr* or developing nation* or developing population* or developing world or less developed countr* or less developed nation* or less developed world or lesser developed countr* or lesser developed nation* or lesser developed world or under developed countr* or under developed nation* or under developed world or underdeveloped countr* or underdeveloped nation* or underdeveloped world or middle income countr* or middle income nation* or middle income population* or low income countr* or low income nation* or low income population* or lower income countr* or lower income nation* or lower income population* or underserved countr* or underserved nation* or underserved population* or under served population* or under served nation* or under served population* or deprived countr* or deprived

population* or high burden countr* or high burden nation* or countdown countr* or countdown nation* or poor countr* or poor nation* or poor population* or poor world or poorer countr* or poorer nation* or poorer population* or poorer world or developing econom* or less developed econom* or underdeveloped econom* or under developed econom* or middle income econom* or low income econom* or lower income econom* or low gdp or low gnp or low gross domestic or low gross national or lower gdp or lower gnp or lower gross domestic or lower gross national or lmic or lmics or third world or lami countr* or transitional countr* or emerging econom* or emerging nation*).ti,ab,hw,kf.

14 9 and 12 and 13

[end]