

Psychosocial factors of sexual behaviour among women using heroin and other drugs: A systematic literature review

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Background

- Prevalence of **sexually transmitted infections** (STIs) is of **30-40%** among drug users^{2,10}
- Prevalence of **HIV** among injecting drug users (IDUs) are of **9%** (men) and **13%** (women)^{1,3}
- Prevalence of **Hepatitis C** and **Hepatitis B** among IDUs are of **50-70%** and **20-30%**⁴⁻⁶
- Women using heroin are amongst the most at risk population groups for STIs and BBVs

(Prevalence of STIs and BBVs among the general population is of < 1%)

Women are particularly at high risk for STIs/BBVs⁷⁻¹¹

Drug use-related risks
Sexual risk practices
Gender inequalities



Aims

1. Identify psychosocial factors of sexual practices among women using heroin and other drugs (WHOD) contributing to the development and maintenance of sexual health behaviours
2. Review the nature and quality of the evidence available

Findings

Characteristics included papers

- Quantitative studies n=23; Qualitative studies n=7
- Cross-sectional n=25; Longitudinal studies n=4; Case studies n=1
- Women-only studies n=17
- Most United States (n=13)
- Duration studies: 2 weeks – 9 years

Psychosocial factors of sexual behaviour

- 1) Socio-demographics
- 2) Gender roles and violence against women
- 3) Substance use
- 4) Sex work
- 5) Partner characteristics and drug-using patterns, and context of sex
- 6) Preferences, negotiation and availability of condoms
- 7) HIV status and STIs
- 8) Multiple sexual partners
- 9) Love and trust
- 10) Reproductive health and motherhood
- 11) Risk awareness and perception of control

Methods

Search Strategy

- PubMed, EMBASE, PsycNET, Web of Science, Scopus (+ PsycEXTRA – grey literature)
- Between 1995-end June 2016
- Search terms: 'women*', 'heroin use*', 'sexual behaviour*', 'STI', 'HIV'

Inclusion Criteria

- Women (≥18 years) only data
- Any sexual orientation
- Heroin primary drug used
- Qualitative & quantitative
- Any sexual behaviour

Quality Analyses

- PROSPERO registration CRD42016039842
- PRISMA guidelines
- 3 reviewers / Moderate inter-rater reliability (0.5)

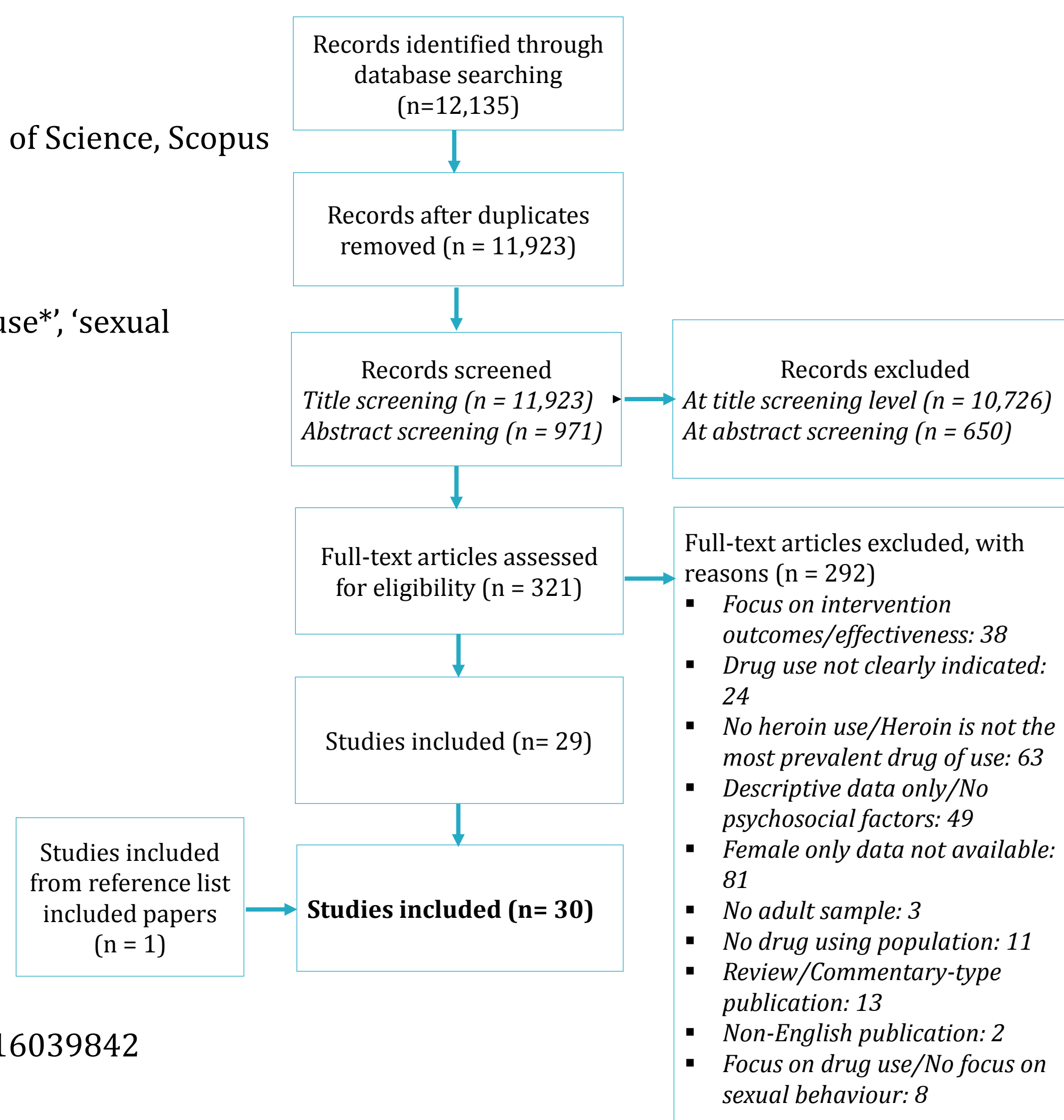


Figure 1. Flow diagram of study selection criteria.

Research impact

This is the first systematic review that presents a comprehensive overview of the evidence available on the determinants of sexual behaviours among WHOD. Synthesising the data presented several challenges that highlighted the lack of consistency in the methodology and outcomes of the included studies. Overall, this review has highlighted the interrelation of multiple factors associated with sexual risk behaviours. It has also identified crucial implications for future research and might serve as a guidance for the development of health promotion strategies to tackle STIs and BBVs among WHOD.

This study obtained NHS ethical approval: REC Ref. 16/NW/0432; IRAS ID 205701.
There are no conflicts of interest

References

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