



**ENGAGING MEN IN HIV PREVENTION: CHANGING GENDER NORMS IN
VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES**

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ABSTRACT

HIV prevention efforts have historically focused on women and key populations, often overlooking the role of men, especially in vulnerable communities where traditional gender norms can significantly impact health behaviors. These gender norms often prevent men from engaging in HIV prevention activities, such as testing, treatment adherence, and safe sexual practices. This review highlights the critical need to engage men in HIV prevention by addressing these norms, which often associate masculinity with avoiding health-seeking behaviors. By transforming these gender perceptions, public health programs can achieve more inclusive, effective, and sustainable HIV prevention outcomes. The review discusses various strategies to engage men in HIV prevention, such as community-based interventions, male-targeted awareness campaigns, and gender-sensitive health services. These interventions aim to challenge traditional views of masculinity, promote positive behaviors, and provide men with the tools and knowledge to take responsibility for their sexual health. Key strategies include peer education programs, sports-based initiatives, and the integration of HIV prevention into broader male-dominated health sectors like workplaces. The review also emphasizes the importance of addressing barriers such as stigma, social pressures, and access to care to facilitate greater male participation in HIV prevention.

KEYWORDS: *HIV, Gender norms, Men's involvement, Vulnerable communities, Behavioral change.*

INTRODUCTION

HIV prevention strategies have historically focused on women, key populations, and marginalized groups, as these populations are disproportionately affected by the epidemic. While this approach has undoubtedly been critical in mitigating the spread of HIV, a key gap remains: the engagement of men in HIV prevention, particularly in vulnerable communities where traditional gender norms play a central role in shaping health behaviors. Men, especially in these communities, often face significant barriers to participation in HIV-related activities, including testing, treatment, and prevention strategies. These challenges are rooted in rigid gender expectations that limit their willingness to seek healthcare, discuss sexual health openly, or participate in HIV prevention programs.^[1-2] In many cultures, masculinity is linked to strength, dominance, and emotional restraint, which may discourage men from acknowledging vulnerabilities, including the risk of HIV. This cultural norm can discourage men from engaging in HIV testing, seeking treatment for sexually transmitted infections, or adopting preventative measures such as condom use or pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). As a

result, men in vulnerable communities may be less likely to recognize their role in HIV transmission, leading to delayed diagnoses, increased transmission rates, and poor adherence to HIV treatment regimens. These barriers are compounded by stigma surrounding HIV, with many men perceiving an HIV diagnosis as a threat to their masculinity, further hindering their willingness to seek care.^[3-4]

Despite these challenges, engaging men in HIV prevention is crucial for the success of global HIV control efforts. Men are often the decision-makers in households and communities, and their health behaviors can have a profound impact on the overall dynamics of HIV transmission. In vulnerable communities, where access to healthcare may be limited, and where HIV prevalence may be higher, engaging men in HIV prevention can significantly reduce the risk of transmission. Furthermore, encouraging men to take responsibility for their health and adopt preventive behaviors can help shift societal attitudes, reduce stigma, and promote more equitable gender relations, contributing to broader public health goals.^[5] Changing

entrenched gender norms and shifting societal perceptions of masculinity are central to engaging men in HIV prevention. While these norms may be deeply ingrained, they are not unchangeable. By addressing the root causes of gender inequality and promoting healthier, more responsible models of masculinity, public health programs can help men embrace HIV prevention strategies and take a more active role in their own health. Initiatives that target men, particularly those in rural or marginalized areas, must take into account the cultural, social, and economic factors that influence their behavior and ensure that programs are tailored to their needs.^[6] One effective strategy to engage men in HIV prevention is through community-based interventions that provide men with safe spaces to discuss their sexual health. These programs often involve peer education, where men are trained to educate others about HIV prevention, sexual health, and responsible behavior. By using familiar community settings such as sports events, workplaces, or even barbershops, these initiatives can reach men where they feel most comfortable and foster conversations that might otherwise be avoided in more formal healthcare environments. Peer education is particularly effective in challenging harmful stereotypes and encouraging positive behavior change, as men are more likely to listen to and trust their peers.^[7-8]

In addition to community-based initiatives, health systems need to adapt to better serve men's needs. Many health services are traditionally designed with women in mind, particularly in relation to sexual and reproductive health. Male-friendly health services are essential to breaking down the barriers that prevent men from accessing HIV-related care. This includes providing tailored services such as male counselors, flexible hours, and easily accessible locations, ensuring that men feel comfortable seeking HIV testing, treatment, and prevention services. Integrating HIV prevention into broader male-dominated health services, such as workplaces or wellness programs, can further promote uptake among men and normalize HIV prevention practices as part of routine health care.^[9-10] In vulnerable communities, particularly in low-resource settings, the role of policy and governmental support is crucial in creating an environment where men are encouraged to engage in HIV prevention. Policy reforms that address gender inequality and promote gender-sensitive health services are necessary to overcome the cultural and societal barriers that prevent men from participating in HIV-related activities. Governments and organizations must ensure that HIV prevention is accessible, affordable, and culturally appropriate for men, with a focus on reducing stigma and increasing awareness of the risks associated with HIV transmission.^[11-12]

Challenges in Engaging Men in HIV Prevention

Engaging men in HIV prevention presents significant challenges, many of which are deeply rooted in social, cultural, and structural factors that influence men's attitudes and behaviors regarding health. One of the

primary barriers to engaging men is the traditional gender norms that associate masculinity with emotional restraint, independence, and a reluctance to seek healthcare. These expectations often discourage men from acknowledging their vulnerability to HIV or seeking preventive services such as testing, treatment, and counseling. In many societies, men are socialized to avoid expressing weakness or concern about their health, viewing such actions as contradictory to the stereotypical notion of masculinity. This resistance to acknowledging vulnerability hinders men from seeking out HIV prevention measures, which are often seen as a women's concern, thereby exacerbating the gender gap in health-seeking behavior.^[13-14] Another challenge lies in the stigma surrounding HIV and its association with perceived immorality or sexual deviance. For many men, particularly in conservative or traditional communities, being diagnosed with HIV can carry a heavy social burden. The fear of being labeled as "unmasculine" or "immoral" often discourages men from engaging in HIV testing and treatment. This stigma can be particularly strong in regions where HIV is highly associated with high-risk behaviors, such as commercial sex work or same-sex relationships, creating an environment where men feel ashamed or fearful of disclosing their HIV status or even acknowledging the risk of infection. In such contexts, the social repercussions of seeking HIV prevention services can outweigh the perceived benefits, making men reluctant to participate in programs or access necessary care.^[15-16]

Access to HIV-related services is another critical challenge. In many low-resource settings, healthcare systems are often not designed with men's needs in mind. Clinics and prevention services may be focused on maternal and child health, family planning, and women's reproductive health, with little attention given to male-specific services. Men may also face logistical barriers, such as work schedules, lack of time, and the distance to healthcare facilities, which can deter them from seeking HIV services. In rural or marginalized areas, where healthcare infrastructure is limited, the availability of HIV testing and prevention services is often scarce, and men may not have access to the necessary resources or support to engage with HIV-related programs. Furthermore, healthcare professionals may lack the training and expertise to address the specific needs of men, especially in terms of communication and service provision, further hindering men's willingness to seek care.^[17-18] Socioeconomic factors also play a significant role in limiting men's engagement in HIV prevention. In many communities, men are the primary breadwinners and may prioritize work and income generation over personal health, viewing time spent on health-seeking behavior as an economic burden. The inability to take time off work or travel long distances to access HIV services can prevent men from participating in HIV prevention efforts. In addition, economic insecurity, lack of social support, and limited educational opportunities may leave men with limited knowledge about HIV

prevention or treatment options. This lack of awareness and understanding contributes to misconceptions and unhealthy behaviors, such as reluctance to use condoms, poor adherence to HIV treatment, or the belief that HIV does not affect them, all of which can perpetuate the spread of the virus.^[19]

Moreover, the existing healthcare system may not be sufficiently equipped to provide male-friendly services. Health centers often lack services tailored to male clients, such as male-specific counseling or health education on issues like HIV prevention and safe sexual practices. Programs are frequently designed with women as the primary target audience, reflecting the broader trend of focusing HIV efforts on women, children, and key populations. The lack of male-friendly environments in healthcare settings, coupled with the stigma surrounding HIV, can make it challenging for men to openly discuss their sexual health or HIV-related concerns. Furthermore, there is often a lack of outreach to men in places they frequent, such as sports venues, workplaces, or bars, where engagement could be more effective.^[20-21]

Cultural and religious beliefs also present significant barriers to engaging men in HIV prevention. In some cultures, sexual health issues are taboo topics, and discussions around HIV are often shrouded in silence. Traditional beliefs may limit men's willingness to consider preventive measures such as condom use or HIV testing, particularly when these actions contradict cultural or religious values regarding sexuality and masculinity. The intersection of cultural norms and religious teachings can create an environment where HIV prevention is perceived as morally or socially unacceptable, thus discouraging men from seeking preventive care or engaging in HIV-related conversations.^[22-23] Finally, the lack of male role models in HIV prevention efforts is a substantial barrier. Men are less likely to engage in HIV prevention programs if they do not see other men in similar roles or if HIV prevention is not framed as a male responsibility. Public health campaigns and interventions that include male ambassadors or figures who embody responsible masculinity and prioritize their sexual health can help shift attitudes and encourage other men to take action. Without these role models, men may perceive HIV prevention as something that primarily concerns women or marginalized groups, further isolating them from these vital services.^[24]

Strategies for changing gender norms

Changing gender norms is crucial to engaging men in HIV prevention and ensuring that both men and women take an active role in reducing HIV transmission. These norms, which often dictate specific behaviors, roles, and expectations for men and women, can perpetuate harmful practices that increase vulnerability to HIV. By challenging and transforming traditional gender norms, public health programs can create a more supportive

environment for HIV prevention, encouraging men to take responsibility for their health and promoting healthier behaviors. Several strategies can be employed to shift gender norms and encourage greater male involvement in HIV prevention.^[25]

1. Community-Based Interventions and Peer Education

One of the most effective strategies for changing gender norms is through community-based interventions that involve peer education. Peer education programs utilize trusted community members to deliver messages about HIV prevention, safe sexual practices, and gender equality. By using male role models and community leaders, these programs challenge traditional notions of masculinity and demonstrate that seeking HIV-related services and practicing safe sex are not incompatible with being "manly." Peer education can also help reduce the stigma surrounding HIV, as men may be more willing to listen to peers who share similar experiences or backgrounds. Additionally, these programs can engage men in open conversations about sexual health, encouraging them to break the silence surrounding HIV prevention and make informed decisions about their health.^[26]

2. Involvement in Male-Dominated Spaces

HIV prevention efforts must extend beyond traditional healthcare settings and reach men in the spaces where they feel most comfortable, such as workplaces, sports teams, or community centers. By integrating HIV prevention into these male-dominated environments, public health programs can create opportunities for men to discuss sexual health issues in a more relaxed and familiar context. For example, sports-based initiatives, where men engage in physical activities while also receiving HIV education, can effectively challenge gender norms by presenting health-seeking behavior as part of a well-rounded, active lifestyle. These settings allow for informal conversations about HIV, reducing the stigma and fear that might prevent men from engaging with healthcare professionals.^[27]

3. Media and Public awareness campaigns

Media and public awareness campaigns play a powerful role in shaping societal attitudes and perceptions. By using television, radio, and social media, campaigns can challenge harmful gender norms and redefine what it means to be a "real man." Featuring men who actively engage in HIV prevention, such as those who get tested, use condoms, or support gender equality, can normalize these behaviors and provide positive role models for other men to emulate. Campaigns should focus on portraying men as proactive and responsible when it comes to their health, emphasizing that seeking care and practicing HIV prevention is a sign of strength, maturity, and responsibility, rather than weakness or vulnerability. The inclusion of diverse male voices and experiences in these campaigns can help break down stereotypes and reach a broader audience.^[28]

4. Gender-Transformative approaches in health programs

Gender-transformative approaches aim not only to challenge harmful gender norms but also to promote gender equality by engaging both men and women in changing behaviors and perceptions. In HIV prevention programs, this can involve integrating gender equality training into health education, where both men and women learn about the harmful effects of traditional gender norms on health outcomes. By encouraging both genders to reflect on their roles and responsibilities in HIV transmission and prevention, these programs help create a more equitable environment where men are encouraged to take on more equal responsibilities in sexual health. For example, campaigns can focus on men's roles as partners in family planning, HIV prevention, and supporting their female counterparts in accessing healthcare services.^[29]

5. Promoting positive masculinity

Another key strategy is to promote positive masculinity, which involves redefining what it means to be a man in a way that embraces emotional expression, vulnerability, and responsibility for one's health. Positive masculinity reframes traditional concepts of strength and dominance, emphasizing traits like empathy, care for others, and the ability to acknowledge one's limitations. Promoting positive masculinity in HIV prevention campaigns can empower men to reject harmful stereotypes and take proactive steps in protecting their health. This includes encouraging men to embrace responsible behaviors, such as using condoms, getting tested for HIV, and seeking regular medical care. By emphasizing that a "real man" is one who cares for himself and his loved ones, this approach can help shift societal attitudes toward more inclusive and health-positive views of masculinity.^[30]

6. Engaging Men in Family Planning and Reproductive Health

To shift gender norms, it is essential to engage men in family planning and reproductive health. Traditionally, these areas have been viewed as women's responsibilities, but involving men in these discussions and decisions is crucial for promoting HIV prevention. When men understand the importance of contraception, HIV testing, and maternal health, they are more likely to support their partners and take an active role in preventing HIV transmission. Health programs should provide information about the shared responsibility of men and women in family planning, emphasizing how these practices contribute to the health of both partners. This involvement not only reduces the burden on women but also promotes healthier, more balanced relationships where both partners are equally invested in protecting their health.^[31]

7. Policy and Legal reforms

Policy and legal reforms are essential for creating a supportive environment that encourages men to challenge gender norms and participate in HIV

prevention. Governments should implement policies that promote gender equality, protect individuals from discrimination, and ensure that HIV-related services are accessible to men in all settings. Legal reforms can address issues such as gender-based violence, which often contributes to HIV transmission, by creating laws that hold perpetrators accountable and protect victims. Moreover, policymakers should support programs that challenge harmful gender stereotypes in the media, schools, and workplaces, making it easier for men to adopt positive health behaviors without fear of social repercussions. By creating policies that support both gender equality and HIV prevention, governments can help shift societal attitudes and make it easier for men to engage in HIV prevention efforts.^[32]

Effective Interventions to Engage Men in HIV Prevention

Engaging men in HIV prevention is essential for reducing the transmission of the virus and improving overall public health outcomes. However, addressing the complex social, cultural, and behavioral factors that often hinder men from participating in HIV prevention efforts requires tailored interventions that resonate with their needs, values, and behaviors. Effective interventions to engage men in HIV prevention must go beyond traditional health education approaches, adopting strategies that consider the gender dynamics, social norms, and barriers specific to male engagement. The following interventions have been shown to be effective in reaching men and encouraging active participation in HIV prevention:

1. Community-Based Outreach and Peer Education

One of the most effective approaches for engaging men in HIV prevention is through community-based outreach programs that use peer educators. Peer education programs leverage trusted community members or male role models to disseminate HIV prevention messages and encourage health-seeking behaviors. Peer educators can effectively break down barriers such as stigma and fear, creating a space where men feel comfortable discussing their sexual health, getting tested, and seeking treatment. By engaging men who are seen as credible and relatable, these programs can challenge traditional gender norms and foster a sense of shared responsibility for HIV prevention.^[33]

2. Workplace-Based HIV Prevention Programs

Workplaces provide a unique opportunity to engage men in HIV prevention, particularly in settings where men are the majority. Implementing HIV education and testing programs in workplaces can increase access to preventive services and raise awareness about the importance of HIV testing and condom use. Workplace-based programs can also address concerns related to time and financial constraints, as they bring services to men where they spend a significant portion of their time. These programs often include awareness campaigns, HIV counseling, and confidential testing, as well as education on safe sexual practices. By integrating HIV

prevention into daily routines, workplace programs reduce stigma and promote health-seeking behavior in a familiar environment.^[34]

3. Sports-Based Interventions

Sports and recreational activities offer a dynamic and engaging platform to reach men and communicate HIV prevention messages. Many men are involved in sports, whether professionally or recreationally, making these settings ideal for health interventions. Sports-based programs use sports events and team activities to integrate health messages, such as condom use, HIV testing, and safe sexual practices. They provide an informal and enjoyable environment where men are more likely to engage with health workers, learn about HIV prevention, and participate in testing and counseling. These programs often incorporate social events, competitions, or team-building activities to increase participation and foster positive health behaviors.^[35]

4. Targeted media campaigns

Media campaigns, including television, radio, and social media platforms, are powerful tools for reaching a large audience and challenging harmful gender norms. By featuring positive male role models who actively participate in HIV prevention, these campaigns can reshape perceptions of masculinity and encourage men to seek HIV-related services. Media campaigns can also target specific male populations, such as those in high-risk groups (e.g., men who have sex with men, truck drivers, or migrant workers), with tailored messages that address their unique needs. By focusing on men's health and well-being, these campaigns create a broader cultural shift where men view HIV prevention as part of their responsibility and self-care.^[36]

5. Integration of HIV Prevention into Primary Health Services

For HIV prevention to be truly accessible, services must be integrated into routine healthcare settings where men are already seeking care. Integrating HIV testing and counseling into general healthcare services, such as primary care visits, can increase the likelihood of men engaging in HIV prevention without feeling stigmatized. Healthcare providers should be trained to address the specific needs of men, offering services in a way that is non-judgmental and inclusive. For example, offering HIV testing as part of general health check-ups or family planning services can normalize the process and reduce the stigma associated with seeking HIV care. Making HIV prevention services readily available in settings where men are comfortable can improve uptake and encourage regular health check-ups.^[37]

6. Involvement in Family Planning and Reproductive Health

Encouraging male involvement in family planning and reproductive health initiatives is another key strategy to engage men in HIV prevention. Historically, family planning services have focused on women, but by

involving men in discussions around contraception, sexual health, and HIV prevention, it is possible to promote shared responsibility for sexual and reproductive health. Programs that encourage men to take part in family planning sessions, support their partners in accessing HIV testing, and learn about condom use and other prevention strategies, can break down gender norms and make HIV prevention a shared concern. These initiatives can also help address misconceptions about masculinity, showing that responsible sexual behavior benefits both men and women.^[38]

7. Community Dialogues and Men's Health Clinics

Facilitating open community dialogues and establishing men's health clinics specifically designed to address their needs is an effective intervention for engaging men in HIV prevention. Community dialogues create a space for men to openly discuss issues related to HIV, sexual health, and gender norms. These discussions can be facilitated by community leaders, healthcare professionals, or peer educators who promote healthy behaviors and share HIV prevention information. Men's health clinics provide tailored services for men, such as HIV testing, counseling, and education on sexual health and HIV prevention strategies. These clinics can be set up in both urban and rural areas to increase access and ensure that men feel comfortable seeking care without judgment.^[39]

8. Incorporating HIV Prevention into Social Movements and Gender-Equality Programs

Integrating HIV prevention into broader social movements that focus on gender equality and the promotion of healthy masculinities can also be highly effective in shifting attitudes. Gender-equality programs that challenge traditional notions of masculinity and encourage men to take responsibility for their sexual health can create lasting change. For example, programs that engage men in discussions around consent, sexual rights, and shared responsibility for health can empower men to take an active role in preventing HIV. By aligning HIV prevention with broader efforts to address gender inequality, these initiatives can create systemic changes that support men's involvement in both HIV prevention and gender-equitable practices.^[40]

9. Community Health Workers and Mobile Health Interventions

The use of community health workers (CHWs) and mobile health interventions can help reach men in underserved and remote areas where HIV prevention services are limited. CHWs can provide education, support, and HIV testing in local communities, offering information that is culturally relevant and specific to the needs of men. Mobile health interventions, including mobile clinics and health campaigns, can bring HIV prevention services directly to men, reducing barriers related to transportation, cost, and time constraints. These interventions can be especially effective in rural

areas, where access to healthcare facilities is limited, ensuring that men can receive the care and education they need.^[41]

The Role of Health Systems in Supporting Men's HIV Prevention

The role of health systems in supporting men's HIV prevention is critical to achieving comprehensive and sustainable progress in the fight against HIV. Health systems are uniquely positioned to provide the infrastructure, resources, and support needed to ensure that men can access the services and information they require to prevent HIV. However, to effectively engage men, health systems must adapt to their specific needs, address barriers to care, and incorporate strategies that promote gender-sensitive and accessible HIV prevention services.

1. Ensuring Access to Comprehensive HIV Prevention Services

Health systems are essential for providing comprehensive HIV prevention services, including HIV testing, counseling, and access to antiretroviral medications (ARVs) for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). These services must be available and accessible to men, especially those in vulnerable or underserved populations, such as men who have sex with men (MSM), migrant workers, and young men in high-risk areas. Health systems can support this by integrating HIV prevention into general health services, ensuring that HIV testing and prevention are part of routine check-ups and that men have easy access to information and counseling about HIV prevention methods. Additionally, providing accessible and non-judgmental HIV testing and treatment services in settings where men are already accustomed to seeking care (e.g., primary healthcare facilities, sexual health clinics, or workplaces) can help reduce stigma and promote health-seeking behavior.^[42]

2. Training Healthcare Providers to Engage Men in HIV Prevention

A critical role of health systems in supporting HIV prevention for men lies in the training and education of healthcare providers. Healthcare workers must be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively engage men in HIV prevention discussions, particularly in addressing the gender dynamics that influence their behavior. Training healthcare providers to be sensitive to men's unique health needs and concerns can ensure that they create a supportive and non-judgmental environment for men to seek HIV prevention services. Furthermore, healthcare workers should be trained to challenge traditional gender norms that may limit men's participation in HIV prevention, focusing on how to empower men to take responsibility for their health and that of their sexual partners.^[43]

3. Integrating HIV Prevention into Existing Health Programs

Health systems can support HIV prevention efforts for men by integrating HIV prevention into other health

programs, such as sexual and reproductive health services, family planning, and mental health services. By framing HIV prevention as part of broader health initiatives, health systems can reduce the stigma associated with HIV and promote its integration into routine healthcare practices. For example, incorporating HIV prevention counseling into family planning services can provide men with an opportunity to learn about safer sexual practices and engage in HIV testing. Moreover, offering HIV prevention alongside services that address other health issues, such as substance abuse or mental health, can reach men who might otherwise be hesitant to seek HIV-specific services due to stigma or fear.^[44]

4. Addressing social determinants of health

Health systems have a key role in addressing the social determinants of health that impact men's ability to access HIV prevention services. These include factors such as income, education, employment, housing, and social support networks. Health systems can advocate for policies that address these underlying issues, ensuring that men in vulnerable situations, such as those experiencing poverty or marginalization, have access to HIV prevention services. Additionally, health systems can provide targeted outreach to men who are at higher risk of HIV, such as those with limited access to healthcare, those living in rural areas, and those in unstable or transient living situations. By addressing the broader social conditions that affect men's health, health systems can create a more equitable environment for HIV prevention.^[45]

5. Community-Based and Peer-Led Approaches

Health systems can support men's HIV prevention by fostering community-based and peer-led approaches that create a supportive environment for men. Peer education programs and community health workers who are trusted members of local communities can be effective in reaching men who may be reluctant to seek formal healthcare services. By training community leaders and peers to educate men about HIV prevention, the health system can reduce stigma and create a space for open dialogue about sexual health. Furthermore, these community-based approaches can be tailored to the specific needs of different male populations, such as young men, men in high-risk professions, or men from minority communities, ensuring that the HIV prevention message resonates with the target audience.^[46]

6. Improving Health System Accessibility and User-Friendliness

To effectively engage men in HIV prevention, health systems must also focus on improving accessibility and user-friendliness of services. This includes reducing waiting times, offering services at convenient hours, and ensuring that healthcare facilities are easily accessible to men, particularly those living in rural or remote areas. It may also involve expanding the availability of mobile health services or establishing mobile clinics to bring HIV prevention services directly to men in underserved

areas. Additionally, health systems should prioritize making HIV services affordable and confidential, as financial or privacy concerns are often barriers to men seeking care. By addressing these practical considerations, health systems can make HIV prevention services more attractive and accessible to men.^[47]

7. Monitoring and Evaluating HIV Prevention Programs for Men

Finally, health systems must prioritize the monitoring and evaluation of HIV prevention programs aimed at men to ensure their effectiveness. Regular evaluation of HIV prevention efforts can help health systems identify gaps in service delivery, understand the barriers men face in accessing care, and assess the impact of different strategies on men's health behaviors. Data collection should include information on the number of men receiving HIV prevention services, the types of services accessed, and the barriers encountered during the process. This data can inform the design of future programs and ensure that health systems are responsive to the evolving needs of men, particularly in the context of HIV prevention.^[47]

CONCLUSION

Engaging men in HIV prevention is crucial for reducing the transmission of HIV and improving overall public health outcomes. Health systems have a central role in supporting and facilitating men's participation in HIV prevention through accessible services, gender-sensitive care, and community-driven approaches. By addressing the specific needs and barriers that men face, such as stigma, limited access to services, and gender norms, health systems can create an environment that encourages men to take proactive steps in safeguarding their health. Moreover, effective training of healthcare providers, integrating HIV prevention into broader health services, and addressing the social determinants of health are essential for building a comprehensive and sustainable approach to HIV prevention. By fostering a supportive, inclusive, and non-judgmental healthcare environment, men are more likely to seek HIV prevention services and adopt healthier behaviors. Community-based interventions, peer education, and improving health system accessibility can further enhance the effectiveness of HIV prevention efforts among men.

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