

# Knowledge Syntheses of Stigma: A Needed Umbrella Review

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## Background

Despite strong global commitments to eliminate HIV-related stigma and discrimination, success has been limited.

To facilitate learning across global and local strategies, we conducted an umbrella review of systematic reviews on stigma in HIV to provide context as part of Getting to the Heart of Stigma, an IAS-funded initiative.

## Methods

We searched PubMed, PsycINFO, and Web of Science from 2008 to May 2021 without language restriction.

We included reviews if people living with or disproportionately affected by HIV were a target population and stigma and/or discrimination (using the authors' terminology) were part of the search eligibility criteria, prespecified analysis, or key results.

Reviews were categorized according to 16 main themes.

## Results

In total, 194 reviews met inclusion criteria.

Reviews addressed:

- Associations and effects of stigma/discrimination (n=28)
- Access to care (n=26)
- HIV testing (n=26)
- Country-specific exploration of stigma/discrimination (n=18)
- Treatment adherence (n=20)
- HIV experiences (n=14)
- Stigma/discrimination reduction in the community (n=13)
- HIV disclosure (n=9)
- Stigma/discrimination in healthcare (n=9)
- Rights and regulations (n=7)
- Intersectionality (n=6)
- Measuring stigma (n=6)
- HIV prevention (n=4)
- Stigma reduction in low countries (n=4)
- Self-stigma (n=2)
- Other (n=2)

Bibliometric analysis shows increasing interest in HIV-related stigma and discrimination.

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Heart  
of Stigma  
IAS

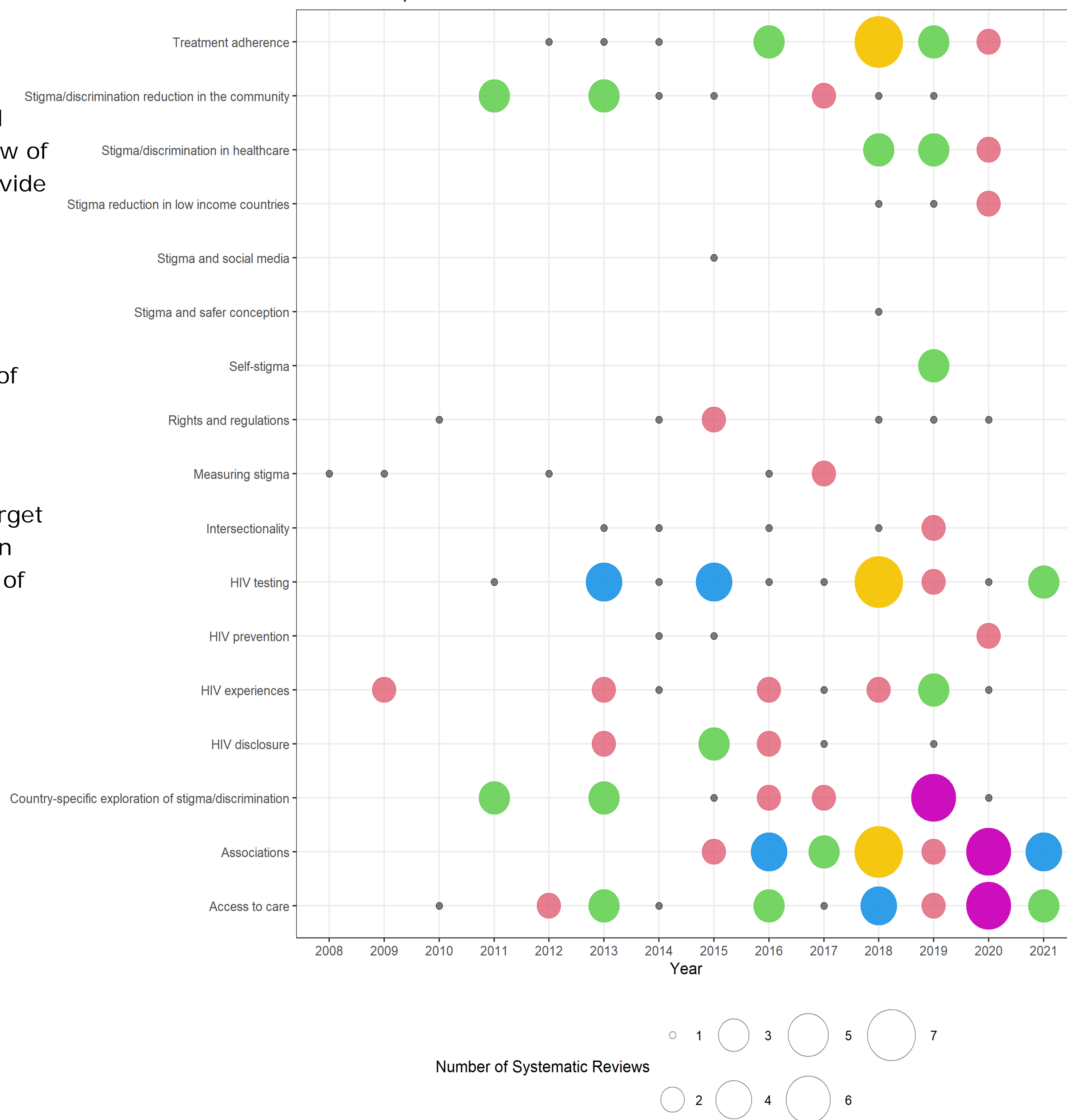


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Evidence Map



Included review varied in scope, with some focused exclusively on stigma while others addressed multiple topics. The umbrella review shows the range of HIV stigma research components that have been addressed, highlighting the emphasis on exploring the effects of stigma, continued and systemic issues with access to care, and progress in HIV testing. The evidence map visualizes the research volume and content of the included systematic reviews.

## Conclusions

This umbrella review provides an overview of the existing evidence base on stigma and discrimination as well as persistent knowledge gaps. It provides context for future knowledge generation needed to better support people living with HIV or disproportionately affected by HIV.