

Drought, Poverty and HIV in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Collins Iwuji & Kingsley Orievulu
16 Sept 2020



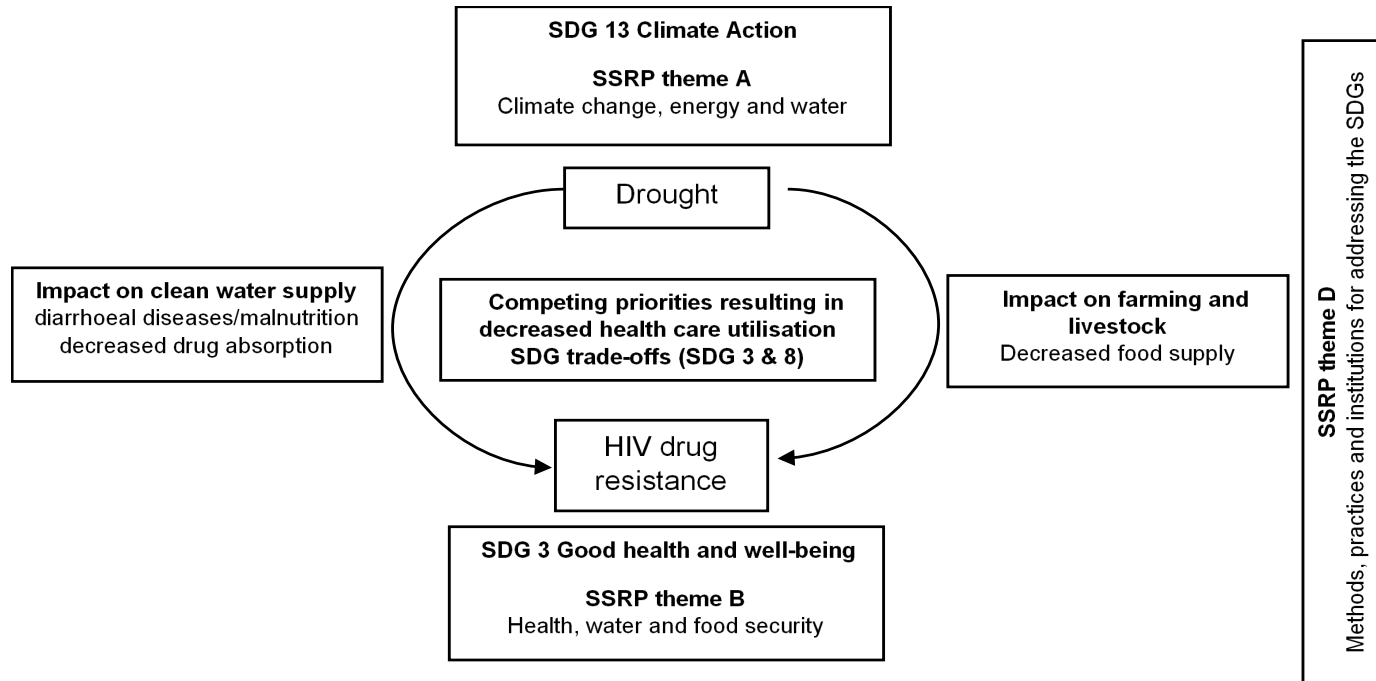
Background & Setting

- 7.5 million PLHIV in South Africa - 2019
 - 19% adult HIV prevalence (15-49 years)
 - 92% aware of their HIV status
 - 70% of all PLHIV on ART
 - 64% of all PLHIV virally suppressed
- UMkhanyakude – district in South Africa
 - Antenatal HIV prevalence is 44.2%
 - Second most economically deprived district in the country
 - Only about 5% of the residents have a higher education
 - 4% are covered by a medical aid scheme
 - Unemployment rate: 54%
 - Drought disaster declared 30 Oct 2015



Hypothesis

- Drought increases vulnerability in rural KZN resulting in PLHIV making difficult trade-offs between healthcare utilization and pursuit of economic sustenance, thereby creating conditions for increased HIV drug resistance.

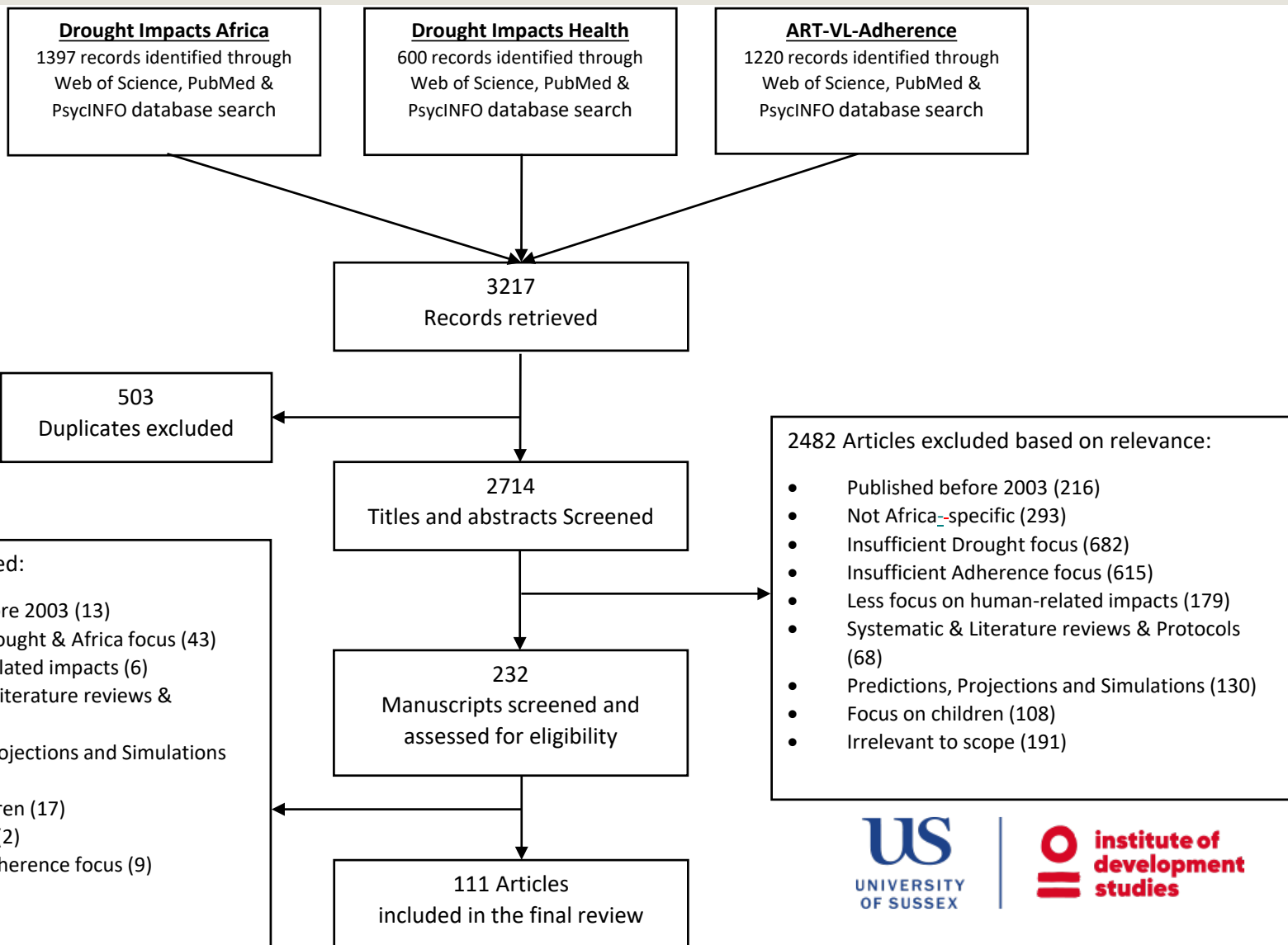


Objectives

- To investigate the relationship between drought and healthcare use in PLHIV
- To investigate the economic, social and demographic impact of drought in rural KwaZulu-Natal
- To investigate the real-life effectiveness of the impact of surveillance data on policy to tackle HIV drug resistance

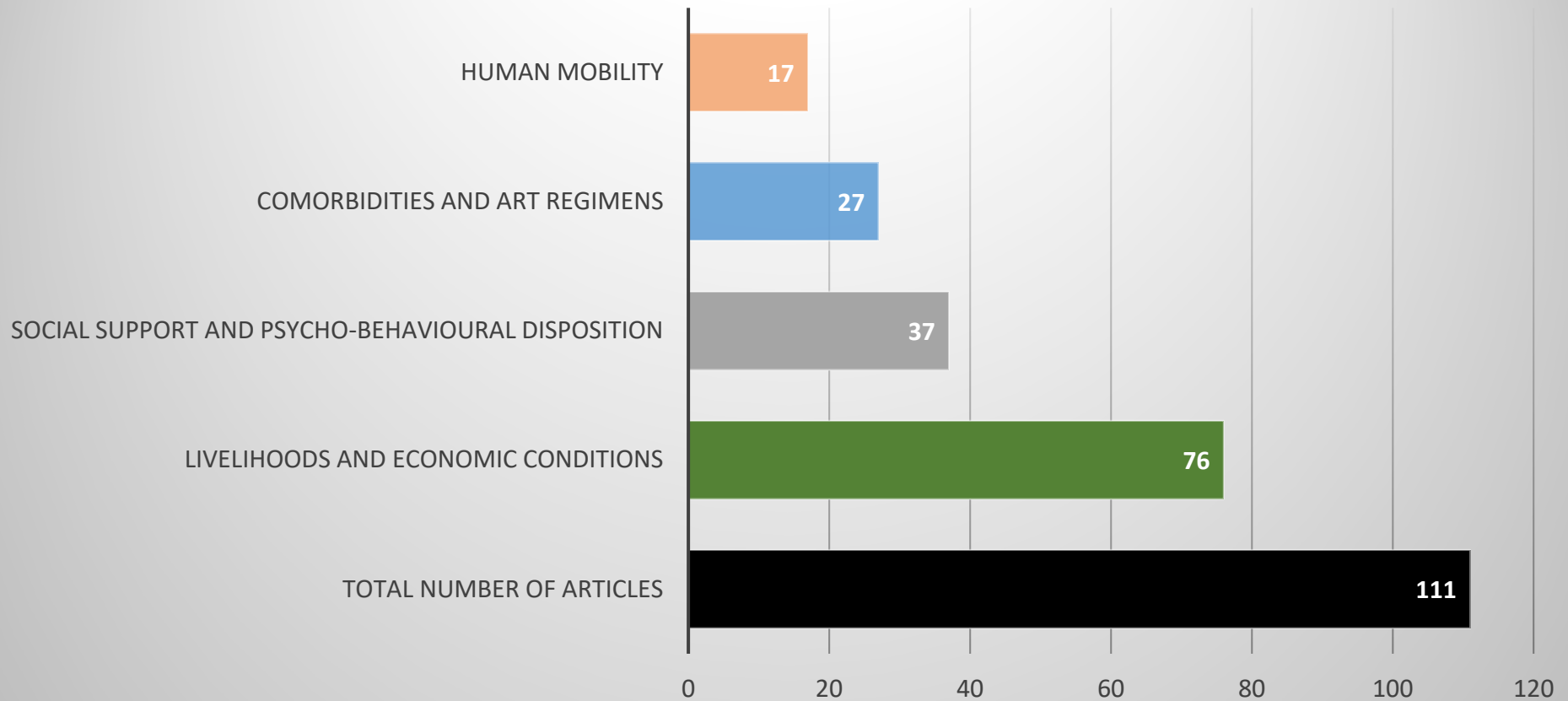
Drought and HIV treatment adherence – Systematic review

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.09.03.20187591v1>

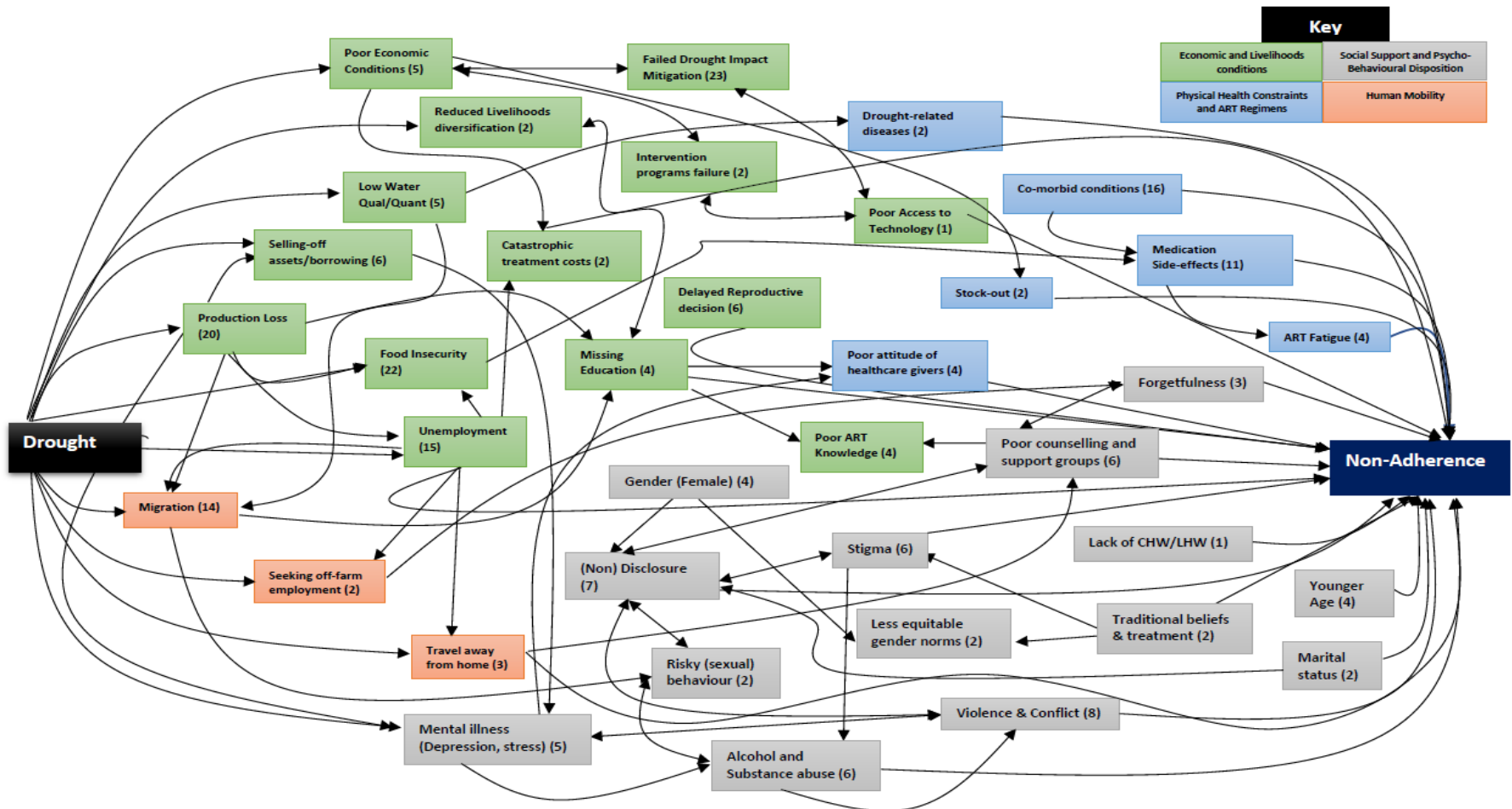


Thematic areas

Drought-HIV ART adherence nexus



Systems diagram linking drought and ART non-adherence



Qualitative interviews: economic impact of drought

Excerpt 1: Loss of (individual & family) assets

“... the drought is so bad that everything died.”

51-year-Old Female Participant

Excerpt 2: Disruption of (family) food security

“... before we could even grow sweet potatoes and taro root to eat, not now, you really cannot”

34-year old Female participant

Excerpt 3: Selling off assets

“... better to sell them than for it to die, yes, yes.”

31-year old Female Participant

Excerpt 4: Spill over effects

“... if there is no water, I don't work.”

45-year old Male participant

Policy Recommendations

- More effective early warning mechanism needed
 - Participants lament insufficient information sharing
- Effective plans required to improve access to water for communities
- Poverty, unemployment and precarious food systems call for incisive policies to address food insecurity
- Stakeholder interviews with policy officials will shed more light on mitigation strategies

Thank you for your time

