

Welcome

Black Women Researchers and PrEP

Panelist



**Christian Spears, MSW,
MPH Dr. Ph (candidate)**
Public Health Researcher,
Leader, Change Agent



Brittany M. Williams, Ph.D
Professor, Researcher,
Speaker, & Consultant



Courtney Bonner, Ph.D
Senior Research
Psychologist

Moderator



Leisha McKinley-Beach




Tuesday, August 8
2PM EST

Who are we?

Atlanta Black Women Leaders on PrEP is a coalition, founded in 2017, to raise women's awareness about PrEP. This coalition comprises researchers, advocates, public health professionals, healthcare providers, and community members who are passionate about increasing awareness, access, and uptake of PrEP among Black women.





MISSION

NASTAD's mission is to advance the health and dignity of people living with and impacted by HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis, and intersecting epidemics by strengthening governmental public health and leveraging community partnerships.

VISION

NASTAD's vision is a world committed to ending HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis, and intersecting epidemics.

Zoom Housekeeping



Please **mute** yourself. We don't want to miss one word of these dynamic presenters.



If you have a question or comments please use the chat feature or raise your hand during Q&A to ask your question.



Christian Spears

ShePrEP Study

Presented by
Christian C. Spears MSW, MPH





Outline

- Background
- Statement of the Problem
- Gaps in Literature
- Purpose Statement
- Significance of Study
- Methods
- Closing Remarks

Background

- Black/African Americans accounted for 44% of new HIV diagnoses
- Black women represent 58% of the 245,000+ women living with a diagnosed HIV infection in the United States
- 1 in 9 women is unaware of their HIV status and their partner's risk factors for HIV
- Black/African American females were in the Southern region (24.6) and the Northeast region (23.5)
- Black women have a 14.6-fold higher risk of acquiring HIV compared to their white counterparts



Statement of the Problem

- Over 80,000 people in the U.S. are on PrEP, yet, only about 1% of the Black people who could benefit from PrEP have filled a prescription
- PrEP awareness among women in the U.S. is believed to be 10-20%
- PrEP initiation is lower among women than men and significantly lower among African American Women (AAW) than white women
- PrEP uptake remains low among Black due to misinformation, low levels of awareness, stigma, and limited access





Gaps in Literature

- Literature that examines dynamics such as:
 - **Trusted sources of sexual health information**
 - **Awareness of PrEP**
 - **Knowledge Baseline levels of PrEP**
 - **Attitudes and Beliefs towards PrEP**
 - **Psychosocial factors associated with willingness to take PrEP**
- Research gaps can be filled with a survey that identifies and addresses barriers to PrEP for AAW



ShePrEP Study

Examining the Influence of the Messaging
and the Messenger Associated with PrEP
Uptake among African American Women

Meet the Dream Team



Christian Spears

Principal Investigator



Dr. Stacy Smallwood

Committee Chair



Dr. Betty Apenteng

Committee Member



Dr. William Mase

Committee Member

Purpose Statement

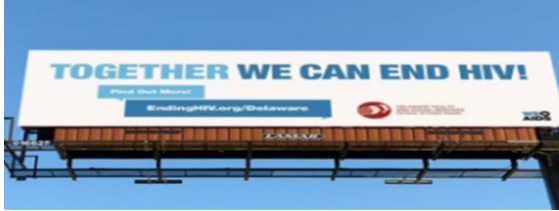


This study aims to assess awareness, perceptions, and receptiveness toward PrEP among African American Women (AAW). This study intends to identify critical factors that will inform more culturally sensitive and appropriate health promotion from providers for persons at risk of acquiring HIV.



Significance of Study

- Provides an intersectional awareness of the multilevel factors that influence AAW's decision
- Limited research on AAW leads to less generalizable data
- Identify individual and social barriers that can inform HIV prevention efforts and structural interventions for AAW
- Examine the influence of the message and messenger
- Offer insight to public health professionals, clinicians, and sexual health educators regarding health promotion



Past Campaigns



Current Campaigns



Methods

- Quantitative Research
 - Deductive Reasoning
 - Better suited for determining large populations' attitudes, practices, and opinions
 - Utilizes electronic survey for a concise, anonymized, and uniform way to disseminate and answer the research questions

Participants

- Inclusion Criteria

- 1) Identity as a woman, regardless of sex assignment at birth
- 2) Adults ages 18 and up
- 3) Identity as an African American/Black woman
- 4) Reside in the United States
- 5) HIV negative
- 6) Had vaginal or anal sex in the past 12 months



Survey Instrument

- Utilize Qualtrics software
- Questions extracted from previously published surveys
- Survey includes questions that assess factors in research questions
- **Anonymous**
- Informed Consent
- ~15-20 minutes to complete the survey
- GSU IRB Approval
- **Opportunity to win raffle 1 of 5 \$100 gift cards**



Research Questions	Survey Item Scale	Analytic Approach
RQ1: Sources of PrEP Information	Scale derived from knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding PrEP (yes/no, select all that apply, and monthly)	Frequencies
RQ2: Awareness	Scale derived from four sections demographics (age, gender, academic year, sexual orientation), HIV risk perception, PrEP awareness, and PrEP acceptability (Yes/No/Not Sure)	Frequencies
RQ3: Beliefs	PrEP Behavioral beliefs, PrEP Normative beliefs, PrEP Control beliefs (Agree Strongly to Disagree strongly)	Descriptive Statistics
RQ4: Willingness	Scale derived from four sections demographics (age, gender, academic year, sexual orientation), HIV risk perception, PrEP awareness, and PrEP acceptability (Yes/No/Not Sure)	Binary Logistic Regression
RQ5: Factors that are significantly associated with willingness a. Knowledge b. Awareness c. Beliefs d. Sexual behaviors e. Stigma f. Medical Mistrust g. Sources of Information	Knowledge PrEP Scale (True, False, Don't Know) Scale derived from four sections demographics (age, gender, academic year, sexual orientation), HIV risk perception, PrEP awareness, and PrEP acceptability (Yes/No/Not Sure) PrEP Behavioral beliefs, PrEP Normative beliefs, PrEP Control beliefs (Agree Strongly to Disagree strongly) Sexual Risk Behavior Scale (SRBS) (Very Often to Never) HIV PrEP Stigma Scale (HPSS) (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) Adapted GBMMS Scale (6 items)	Binary Logistic Regression
RQ5: Messaging	N/A (short answer)	Thematic Analysis
Socio-demographics	N/A (check all that apply, choose from the dropdown menu, yes/no or provide a short answer)	Descriptive Statistics

Scales for Survey Analysis



**Thank you!
Questions?**

Contact Information

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Christian.C.Spears@gmail.com





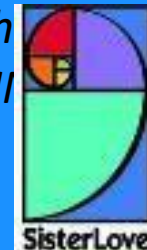
Courtney Bonner



The EMPOW-HER Project:

- Educating Medical Providers on Women- Controlled HIV Prevention to Expand Reach to African American Women in Atlanta
- **Courtney Peasant Bonner, PhD RTI International**
- **Sister Presenters: Christian Spears, PhD(c) and Brittany Williams, PhD**

- *Funded by: National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) through the University of North Carolina Center for AIDS Research (UNC AIDR)*



EMPOW-HER Key Personnel



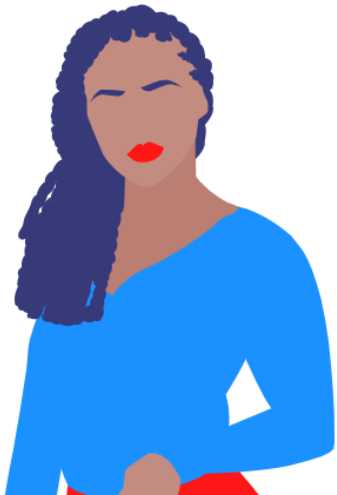
**Courtney Peasant Bonner,
PhD**
Project Director
RTI International



**Felicia Browne, ScD,
MPH**
Co-Investigator
RTI International



**Dazon Dixon Diallo,
MPH**
Co-Investigator
SisterLove, Inc.



Christopher Hurt, MD
Co-Investigator
UNC-CH/ UNC CFAR



Wendee Wechsberg, PhD
Co-Investigator
RTI International

Aims

Pre-Implementation



- Community Collaboration
- Focus Group Discussions
- Qualitative Data Analysis

Implementation



- Development of Training
- Refining Training
- Pretesting Training

Post-Implementation

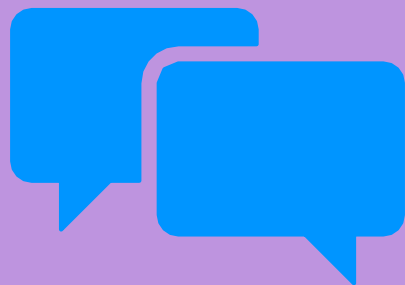


- Data Analyses and Dissemination

Methods



**Community
Engagement**



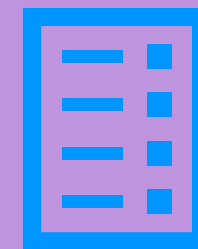
**Focus Groups
and
Interviews
Guided by
CFIR**



**Rapid
Qualitative
Analysis**



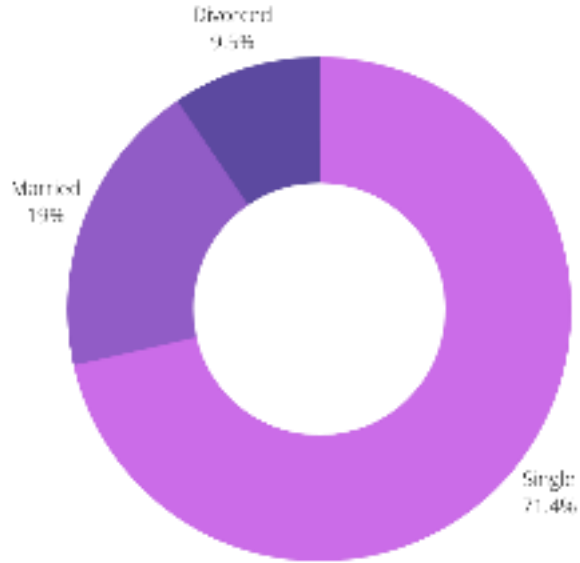
**User-
Centered
Design**



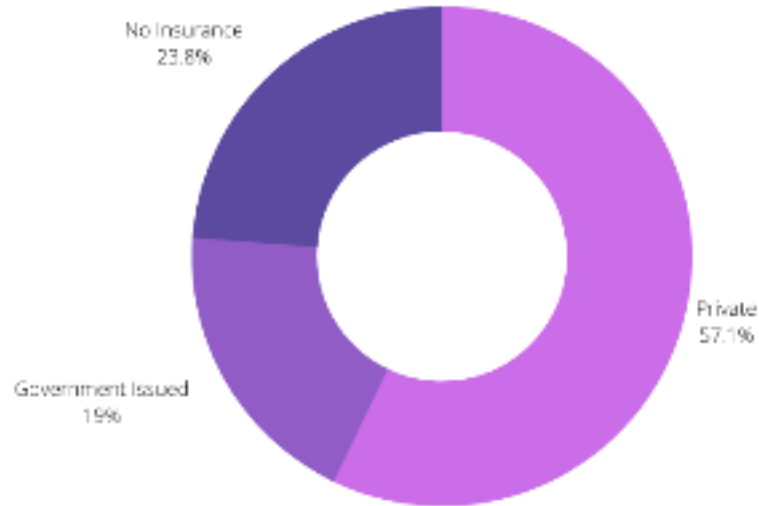
**Implementation
Science
Measures using
Cross Walk**

Demographics (N_{women}=22)

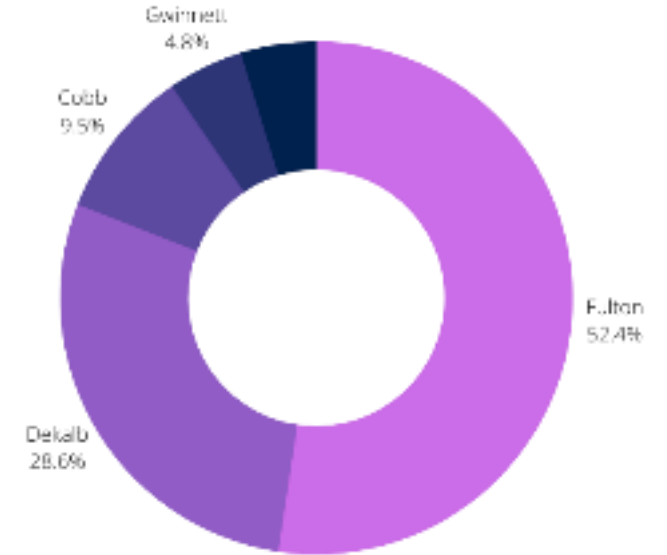
Marital Status



Insurance



County



Education: Four-year college degree or higher



68%

Average Age

33

Key Outcomes

Qualitative Data

- **PrEP Conversations with Providers**
- **Barriers to PrEP Communication with Providers**
- Impact of OBGYN's Characteristics on the Comfort Level of Patients
- **PrEP Benefits**
- **PrEP Concerns**
- Engaging others in the Decision to take PrEP
- PrEP
- **Feasibility of Adherence**
- Changes in Sexual Behavior
- **Preferred Place to Initiate PrEP**
- **Acceptability of PrEP via Telehealth**
- **Preference for injectable vs oral PrEP**

Quantitative Data (Coming Soon)

- Increase providers' PrEP knowledge
- Decrease providers' PrEP-related concerns
- Increase providers' self-efficacy to prescribe PrEP
- Increased the number of PrEP prescriptions
- Acceptability of PrEP Training (AIM)
- Usability of PrEP Training
 - The mHealth App Usability Questionnaire (MAUQ)
- Feasibility of PrEP Training (FIM)

PrEP Communication

“I think it depends on her - if she has a primary care physician or OBGYN that she goes to regularly and she has a relationship with, then maybe she might feel more comfortable.”

Barriers to Communication with Provider

“...But if it's not advertised in some way, she may not feel comfortable asking because she may not know whether...the doctor is aware of that drug or if the doctor would even feel confident or comfortable prescribing that drug.”

Telemedicine

“What if I go into this clinic and I see somebody that I know or somebody sees me going into this clinic, those types of things. So she doesn't have to worry about that if she's doing telemedicine because it's just her and the provider over a screen.”

Preference of Setting

“If she has access to health insurance, then I think that her OBGYN would probably be her preference”

Adherence

“I don't think it's going to be and probably not going to be easy. But I do believe that is doable.”

PrEP Concerns

“...price point, if she had to pay for a portion of it and then side effects, definitely.”

Benefits of PrEP

“...she can have the peace of mind, at least that her body, in effect, is protected”

Oral vs. Injectable PrEP

“But if she is a busy person, always over the place traveling and has a full schedule, then it's probably easier to just to get the shot every two months and schedule her plans, vacations and all of that around the shot.”

EMPOW-HER Training



EMPOW-HER Training

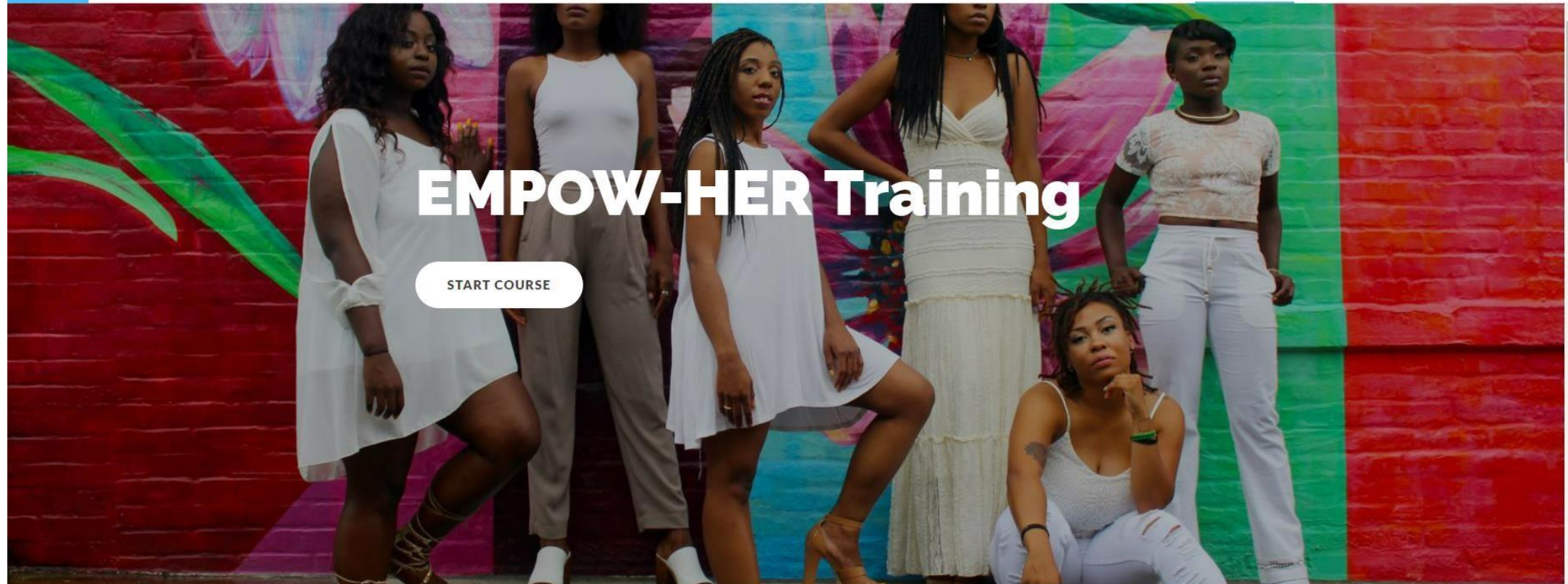
Created By Brittni Howard · Current Version ▾

REVIEW

FEEDBACK



Sign In



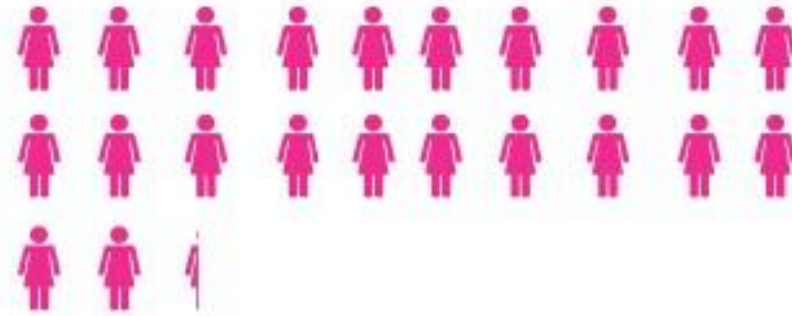
EMPOW-HER Training

START COURSE



EMPOW-HER Training: Pre-Assessment

The screenshot displays the user interface for the EMPOW-HER Training Pre-Assessment. At the top left, the course title "EMPOW-HER Training" is shown, along with the creator "Created By Brittni Howard" and the version "Current Version". On the top right, there are navigation options: "REVIEW", "FEEDBACK", and a "Sign In" button. The main content area is titled "Lesson 1 of 8" and "Pre-Assessment". A large, centered text prompt reads "CLICK TO TAKE THE [PRE-ASSESSMENT](#)". On the left side, a sidebar menu lists the course structure: "Pre-Assessment" (checked), "EMPOW-HER TRAINING", and five modules: "Module 1: Epidemiology", "Module 2: PrEP Basics", "Module 3: Women-focused PrEP Screening", "Module 4: Initial PrEP Visits", and "Module 5: PrEP Follow-up Visits and Managing PrEP Side". A footer at the bottom left contains copyright information: "© 2022 Articulate Global, LLC" and links for "Terms", "Privacy", "Support", and "Cookie Preferences". The bottom right of the main content area shows the current lesson path: "Lesson 2 - Module 1: Epidemiology".



Black women and adolescents living in the South were diagnosed with HIV at a rate of 22.2 new cases per 100,000 people.

Reasons not Individual Risks

Research suggests that HIV risk among Black women **is not** attributable to women engaging in more risky behaviors as compared to women of other races. Black women may be at increased risk of HIV due to myriad social determinants of health. Click the pictures below to explore some structural drivers of HIV among Black women.

Module 1: Epidemiology



Poverty. Lack of financial resources may impact the quality of Black women's relationships and may influence the extent to which women are dependent on others for their survival, which may



Module 2: PrEP Basics

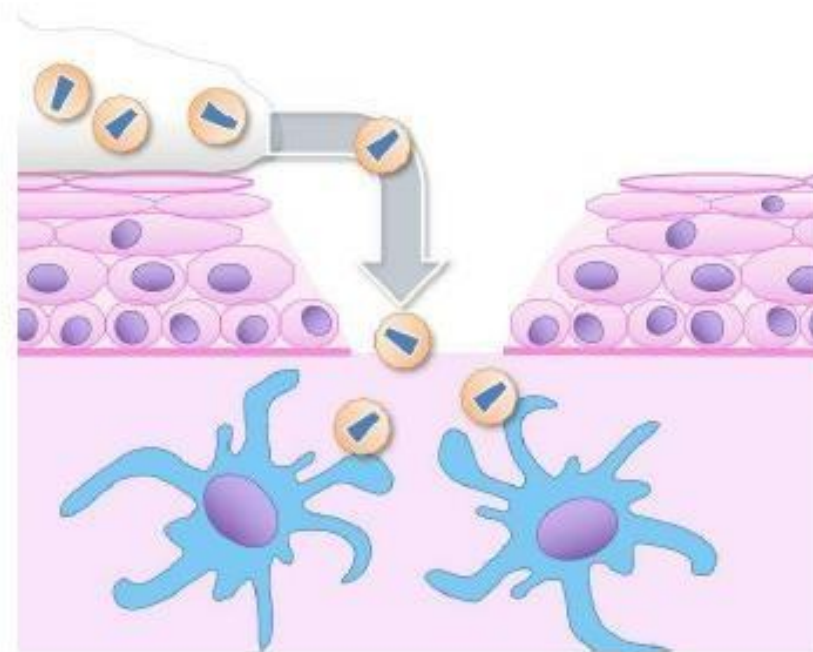
How does PrEP prevent HIV acquisition?

1. PREP FORTIFIES CELLS

2. HIV IS UNABLE REPLICATE

3. NEW CELLS REPLACE OLD CELLS

PrEP fortifies the host cells from within





Module 3: Women-focused PrEP Screening

What is involved in delivering PrEP?

Step 1: Create a non-stigmatizing environment for patients to share information about their sexual health

Step 2: Take a good sexual health history with every patient - this is critical

Step 3: Open the dialogue & assess need for PrEP

Step 4: Determine behavioral and clinical eligibility

Step 4: Choose PrEP Modality



There are four elements to consider when helping patients decide which PrEP options are best for them. [Click on here card](#) to learn how each factor can impact which PrEP modality may work for them.

Types of Partners and Types of Sex

For cisgender women, only emtricitabine/TDF and cabotegravir are approved for HIV prevention.

Module 4: Initial PrEP Visits

Starting in January 2021 most private insurance plans must provide \$0 cost-sharing for at least one PrEP product. [Click here to learn how to confirm that PrEP is covered by an insurance plan.](#)

There are several programs available to help uninsured patients **pay for PrEP**

Ready, Set, PrEP

What is Ready, Set, PrEP?

Ready, Set, PrEP is a federal program, sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services, that provides PrEP medication at no cost to those who qualify!

Module 5: PrEP Follow-up Visits and Managing PrEP Side Effects and Seroconversion

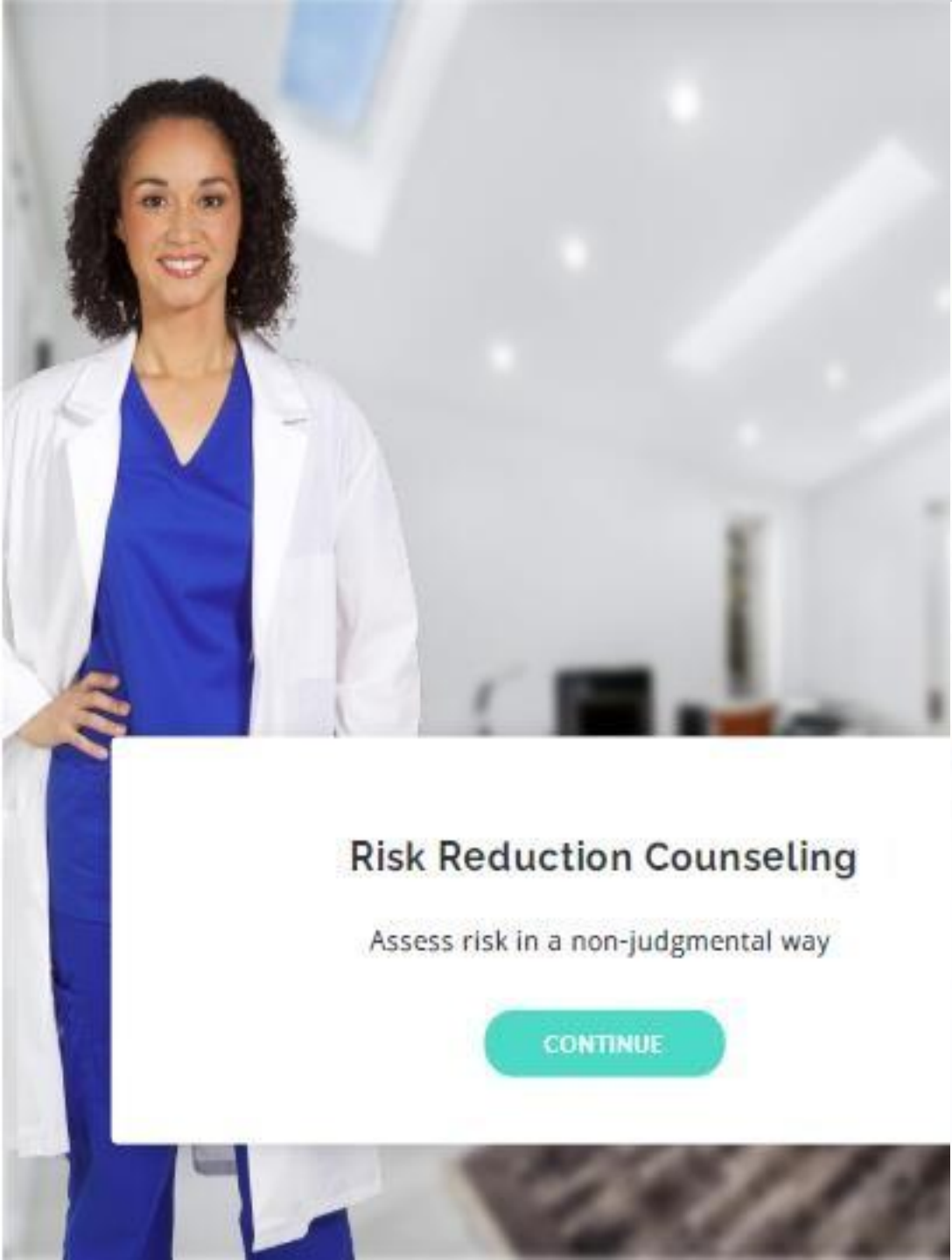


REMEMBER!

Screen for positive gonorrhea, chlamydia, and syphilis to determine substantial risk and if other prevention strategies are needed (e.g., condoms, etc.).

Make sure to screen all suggested exposed anatomical sites for women. Urine testing alone is not sufficient for screening.

The CDC guidance should be used as a guide but is not exhaustive. Women who may be interested in PrEP or benefit from PrEP may not meet all the criteria on this list.



Risk Reduction Counseling

Assess risk in a non-judgmental way

CONTINUE



What is the best way to ask the question below?

1

Has taking PrEP changed the things you do to protect yourself from getting HIV and STIs, for example, using condoms ?

2

Do you use condoms at all anymore, since you've started PrEP?

The background of the top-left section features a dark silhouette of a pregnant woman standing next to a smaller silhouette of a child, set against a light, grid-like background.

Module 6: PrEP and Pregnancy

To learn more about the research and clinical guidance related to PrEP among pregnant and breastfeeding women please visit

[PrEPWatch.com](https://www.prepwatch.com)

The bottom-right section features a photograph of a smiling pregnant woman with dark curly hair, wearing a black sports bra, and gently holding her belly. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent brown background.

The World Health Organization recommends the use of TDF to prevent HIV infection among pregnant and breastfeeding women who are at substantial risk of HIV.

EMPOW-HER Training: Post-Assessment

Please indicate which answer is best.

Is the following statement true or false?

"PrEP is not safe to use with hormonal contraception."

True

False

PREVIOUS

Submit



POST-ASSESSMENT
RESULTS SLIDE

Congratulations,
you passed!

PASSING SCORE

80%

YOUR SCORE

90%



PRINT RESULTS



RETRY QUIZ



Take Home Message

- The narrative related to PrEP is still overwhelming male-focused
- Black women are interested in taking PrEP
- Black women value the recommendation of providers
- OBGYN and primary care providers are in an ideal position to offer PrEP to Black women



Acknowledgements

- Participants
- UNC CFAR (P30 AI050410)
- Substance Use, Gender and Applied Research Group
- UAB Implementation Science Hub
- Femtor: Wendee Wechsberg

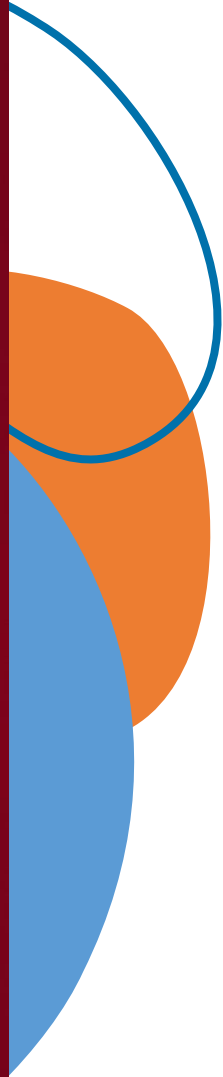


THANK YOU





Brittany Williams

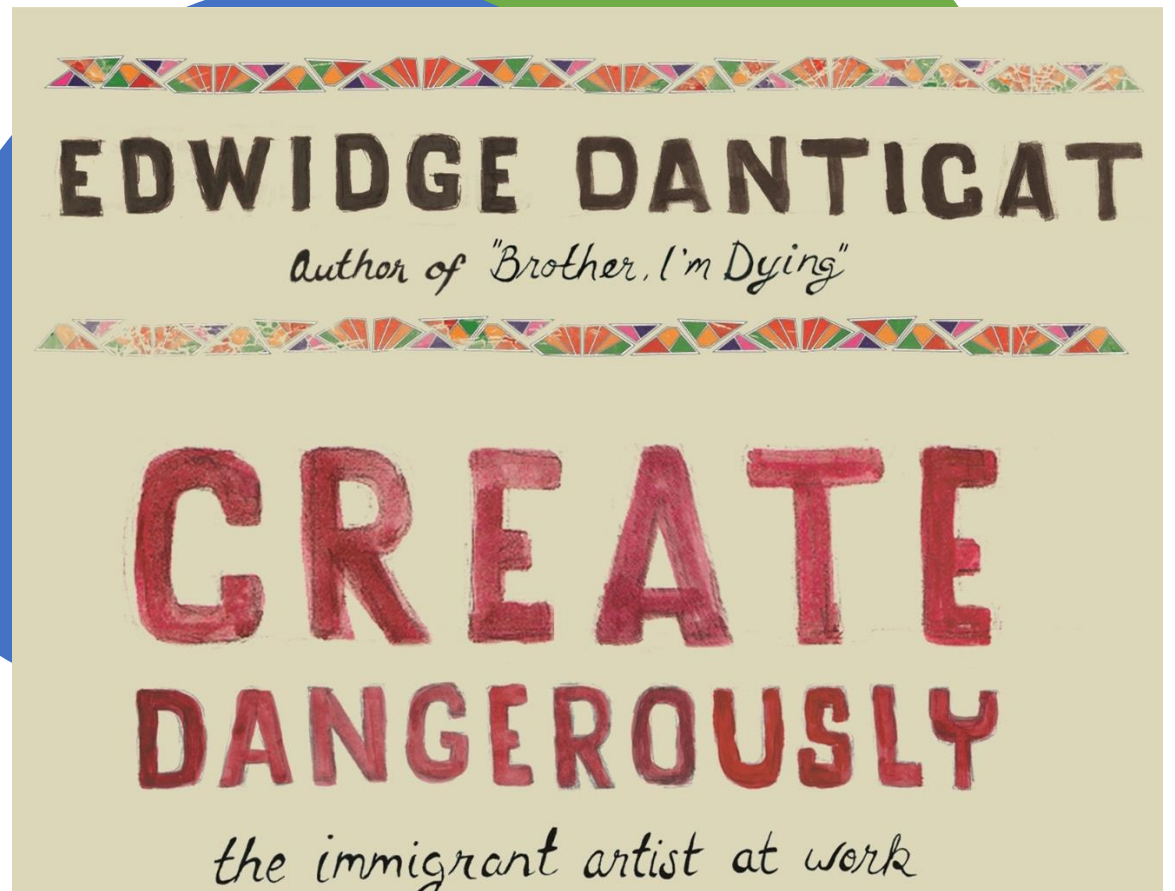


The Danger of a Single Story

Rendering visible Black college women in the HIV/AIDS and PrEP for HIV prevention conversations

“Research Dangerously”

“Create dangerously for people who read dangerously.. This is what I’ve always thought it meant to be a writer... Writing, knowing in part that no matter how trivial your words may seem, someday, somewhere, someone may risk his or her life to read them.” (Danticat, 2010, p.10).



Building a Scholarly Corpus

Content Analysis

- HIV/AIDS in Higher Education Outlets (Williams & Thompson, 2022)
- Black women x HIV AIDS in Higher Education

Sister Circle Study

- Actively Recruiting Participants in Metro Atlanta
- Georgia State University, Spelman College, Atlanta Metropolitan College, Clark Atlanta University

Film Short

- Where are young Black college women in the PrEP conversation?
- How do we change the narrative around PrEP uptake?



Current Project Team & Collaborators



Brit Williams

Principal Investigator



Mandy Chesley

Graduate Research Assistant



Masonia Traylor

Sister Circle Advisory Board Member; co-author



David Thompson

Co-Author



Leisha McKinley-Beach

Sister Circle Advisory Board Member

HIV/AIDS-Related Research in U.S. Higher Education Journals: A Content Analysis

- Blended content analysis (Domas White & Marsh, 2006; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005)
- Investigated how researchers examine and describe HIV/AIDS in U.S. higher education and student affairs (HESA) contexts
- Published in higher education journals between 2008 and 2018.
 - Mixed Methods: Qual with descriptive statistics
 - Number and frequency of HIV/AIDS articles published
 - Their topics, methodology, and research designs
 - demographic categories and populations



Findings

Table 1
Topics Explored by Articles

Topics	<i>(n = 47)^a</i>	
	Total number	% of all articles
Knowledge and awareness	18	38.30
Risk and risky behavior	14	29.79
Social identity disparities (Race/Sex/Gender)	10	21.28
Testing Prevalence and availability	9	19.15
Condom use and negotiation	9	19.15
Institution type (HSI, HBCU, etc.)	7	14.89
Stigma	5	10.64
Alcohol and/or drug use	3	6.38

Note. HSIs = Hispanic-Serving Institutions; HBCUs = Historically Black Colleges & Universities

^aTopic totals and percentages exceed total number of articles and 100%, respectively as several articles focused on more than one topic per article.

- Few researchers published HIV/AIDS-related research in higher education journals (N = 47) between 2008-2018
 - Quantitative (n = 36)
 - Qualitative (n = 8)
 - Mixed methods (n = 3)

Additional Findings

- Of those purporting to engage in identity-aware research practices, several conflated gender and sex ($n = 9$)
- Others ($n = 12$) flattened racial identity into binarized categories (e.g., White vs. non-White or Hispanic vs. non-Hispanic).
- In total, almost a third of the empirical articles ($n = 42$) failed to complete any demographic analysis ($n = 11$) using collected data.





HIV x Higher Ed

-
- Overwhelming focus on risk and risky behaviors across the studies we examined
 - Possibly contributes to HIV/AIDS stigma, undercutting growing awareness efforts for biomedical interventions like PrEP and U=U



Who's PrEParing Black College Women?: A Comprehensive Analysis

- Purpose
 - a. To understand the current scholarly research body on Black cisgender college women and PrEP as a biomedical prevention tool against HIV/AIDS.
- RQs:
 - a. How many PrEP-related articles are published specifically centering Black cisgender women?
 - b. What topics are covered (e.g., access, barriers, stigma)?
 - c. What research methodologies are most prevalent (e.g., quant, qual, mixed)?
 - d. What kinds of campuses are included (HBCUI, PBI, PWI, etc.)?
- Design
 - a. Blended content and comprehensive analysis design

Situating Black Cis College Women in HIV/AIDS Research Content & Comprehensive Analysis

Key Terms

PrEP, Black women, and college (and/or university)

Initial Scan

N= 133 records from PubMed, Embase, ERIC, & PsycINFO

Clean 1

N=112 after removing duplicates

Clean 2

Context: American Focused (removed 9; n= 103)

Clean 3

Removed (87) for non-HIV/AIDS & PrEP focus (n=16)

Clean 4

Removed 5 for excluding Cis women in HIV focus (n=11)

Current Set

N=11 (possibly 9; 2 under secondary review)



Preliminary Findings

- Black women generally aren't in the PrEP scholarship let alone Black college women
- Cisgender women are excluded from a large portion of the studies on PrEP uptake and PrEP usage both external to and within the campus context
- Few peer-reviewed studies exist
 - But there are a lot of dissertations !

Sex PrEPparation

A Documentary Film Short

- 20 min. short featuring, data, interviews, questions, and conversations by, for, and on Black women and PrEP
- Specific discussion of Black cis women
- Currently in post-production





Works in Progress

Sister Circle Data Collection
Post Production & Screenings

Beyond “Know Your Status”: Investigating HIV/AIDS in Conversation with Black College Women



- HIV/AIDS infections are most common among people aged 13-45 (overwhelming population on college campuses)
- Black women account for 58% of all women diagnosed and living with HIV in the U.S.; and Georgia ranks first of all 50 states in new HIV infections.
- Historically Black Colleges & Universities and predominantly Black Minority Serving Institutions in Metro Atlanta are, then, unique contexts to help mitigate the HIV/AIDS epidemic
- Intersectional qualitative study exploring Black college women’s attitudes, skills, and knowledge on the HIV/AIDS crisis in Metro Atlanta using sista circle methodology.



Beyond “Know Your Status”

- Sista Circle Methodology
 - Johnson (2015) defined SCM as “a qualitative research methodology and support group for examining the lived experiences of Black women” (p. 43).
 - A group dialogue space where a Black woman researcher can, while in community with Black women participants, "gain an understanding of a specific issue, topic, or phenomena impacting Black women from the perspective of Black women themselves" (p. 45).
 - 3 Core Tenets
 - Communication dynamics, centrality of empowerment, and researcher as participant
 - SCM as a culturally relevant way to exercise discussion-based group research
- Included Campuses
 - Spelman College, Clark Atlanta University, Georgia State University, and Atlanta Metropolitan State College)



INVESTIGATING HETEROSEXUAL BLACK COLLEGE WOMEN'S ATTITUDES, SKILLS, & KNOWLEDGE ON HIV/AIDS

CALL FOR RESEARCH STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Hi! I'm Brit-- an Atlanta native & researcher at the University of Vermont. I am looking for heterosexual Black undergraduate women at *one* of the *four* Institutions below to participate in a paid sister circle study to discuss **HIV/AIDS** knowledge and attitudes.

I am specifically seeking Black college women who:

- Self-identify as heterosexual and sexually active
- Designated as Juniors & Seniors (including 5th year & "super seniors")
- Enrolled at Spelman College, Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta Metropolitan College, or Georgia State University
- Enrolled at their current campus for *at least* two years



DR. BRIT WILLIAMS

University of Vermont
Brittany.Williams@uvm.edu
@DrBritWilliams

Participants who agree to complete this study will complete three 60-90-minute group interviews with optional reflection surveys. Participants will receive \$25 per interview with a potential \$25 bonus for completing all three interviews (\$100 total compensation). Additional funds are available to support travel to the meeting location.

To express interest &/or participate, sign up w/Dr. Brit below:

bit.ly/ATLBWHIVINFO



This study has been approved by the University of Vermont IRB. This study is funded by the National Academy of Education (NAEd) / Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship program.

To learn more about me, my commitment to Black women, & my research ethics, visit my website: brittanymwilliams.com

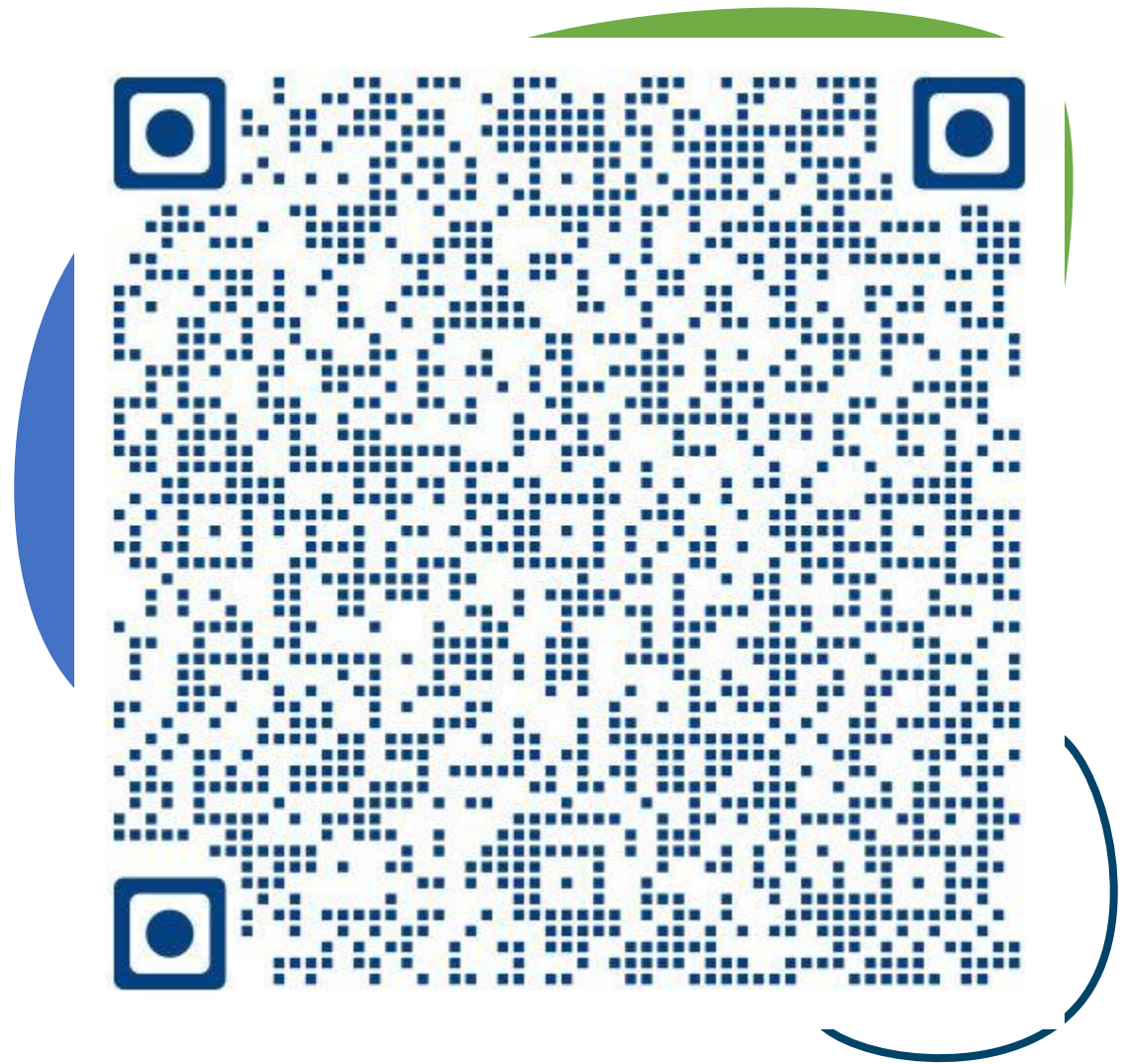


bit.ly/ATLBWHIVINFO

Collaboration Opportunities

I welcome new collaborators and collaboration opportunities in line with my research.

- Email:
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- Web:
www.BrittanyMWilliams.com



Thank You

Brittany Williams

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