



**The HEAT Syndemic:
A new status neutral
framework of the HIV
epidemic among transgender
women to guide prevention
efforts**

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NO CONFLICTS

HIV EPIDEMIC AMONG TRANSWOMEN



50 times more likely to be living with HIV globally

estimated **42%** of TGW are living with HIV in the U.S

less likely:
uptake PrEP
receive ART
less adherent to ART
poorer viral suppression

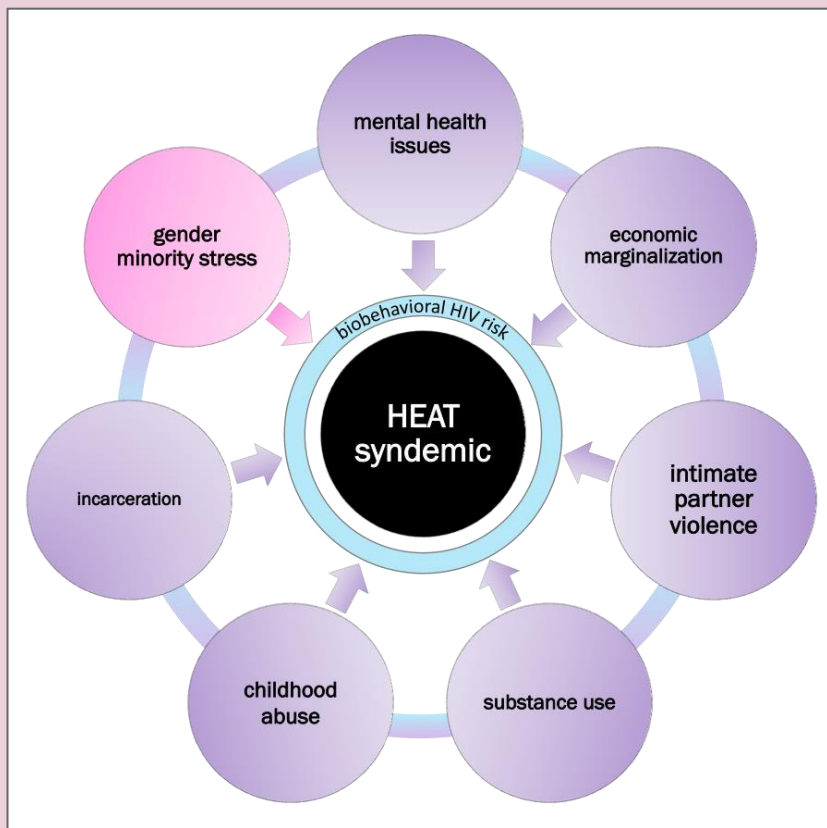


**What's driving this
HIV epidemic?**

GAP

frameworks that specifically address unique factors of HIV risk for transwomen
to guide intervention on the sustained and complex HIV epidemic

simultaneously addressing both primary and secondary prevention



R36 NIDA

HEAT syndemic

HIV Epidemic Among Transgender women

a new status neutral framework of the HIV epidemic among transgender women to guide prevention efforts

based in:
Syndemic Theory
Minority Stress Model

established + unique
syndemic conditions

should consider TOGETHER

HEART study

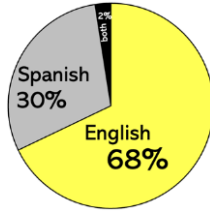
Health & Resilience of Transwomen in Miami



N = 81

Nov 2020 - Mar 2022

Inclusion: male sex assigned at birth, feminine gender, recent penetrative sex and/or injection behavior



cross-sectional biopsychosocial assessment

questionnaires on syndemic conditions via CASI
biospecimen collection: HIV testing, viral load labs

partnered with trans-led CBOs & research staff from community

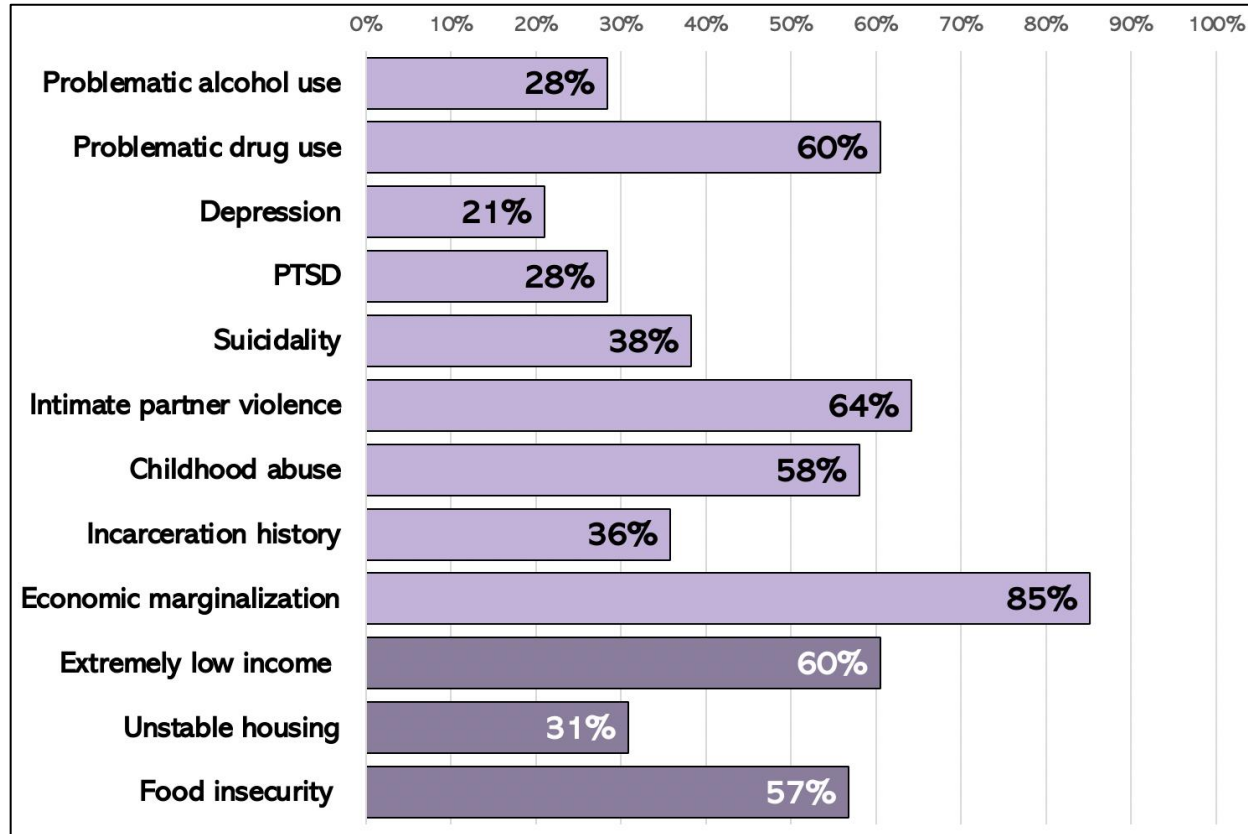
All study procedures received approval from the University of Miami Institutional Review Board (Study# 20191279)



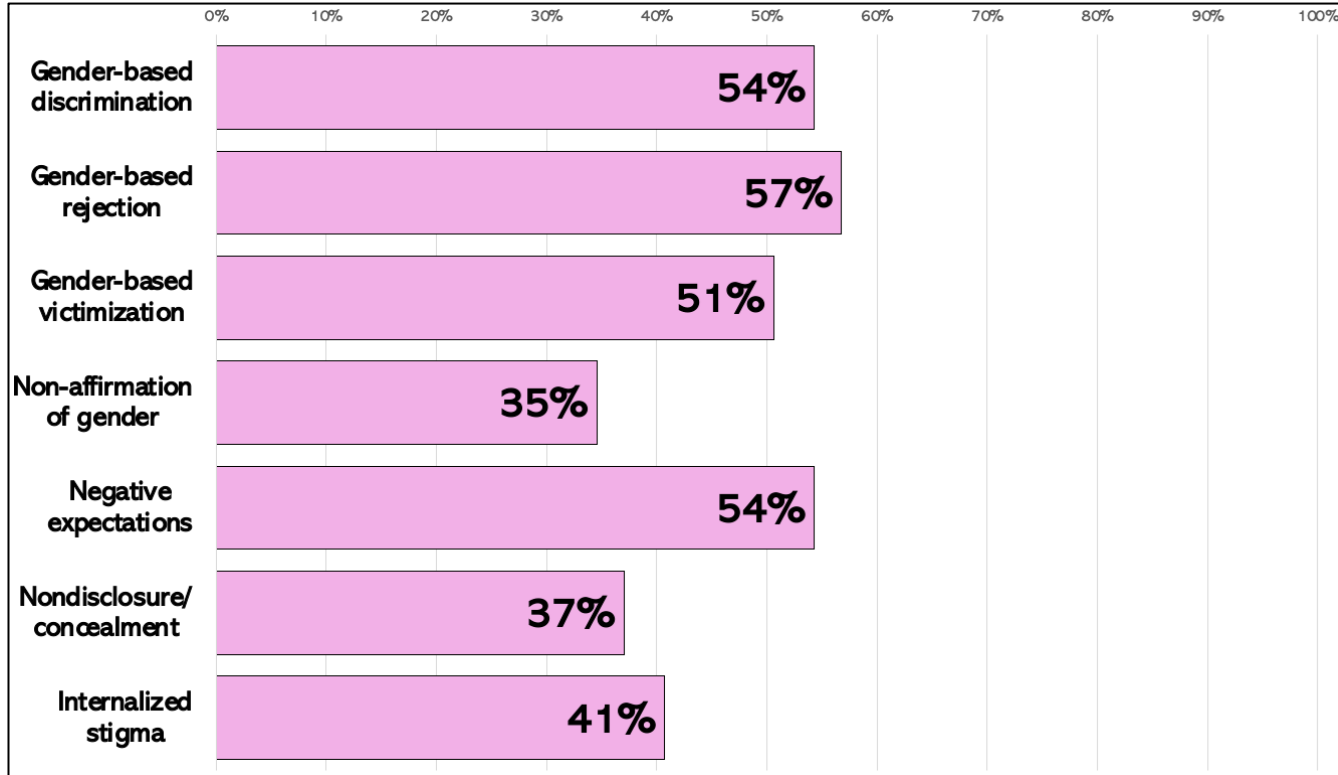
prevalence of syndemic conditions

examine applicability of syndemic
conditions chosen for the framework

PREVALENCE ESTABLISHED SYNDEMIC CONDITIONS



PREVALENCE UNIQUE SYNDEMIC CONDITIONS

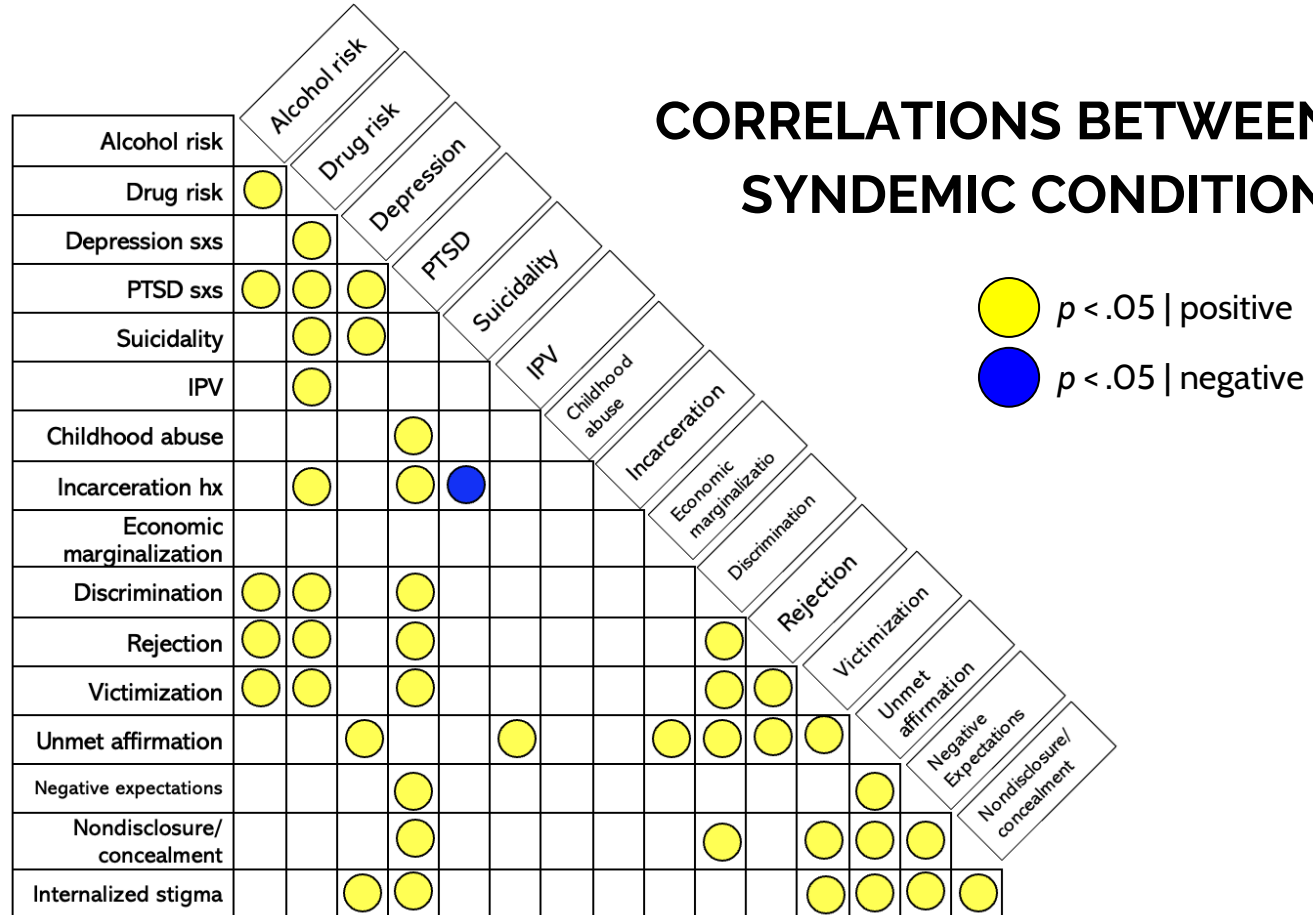




correlations among syndemic conditions

test the framework's assumption that syndemic conditions chosen are interrelated

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN ALL SYNDEMIC CONDITIONS



For correlations between: two binary variables = phi coefficient | two continuous variables = Pearson's r | a continuous and binary variable = point-biserial



bivariate associations between syndemic conditions and HIV status

check on the appropriateness of proposing the framework as status neutral

DIFFERENCES IN SYNDEMIC CONDITIONS BY HIV STATUS

Alcohol risk
Drug risk
Depression sxs
PTSD sxs
Suicidality
IPV
Childhood abuse
Incarceration hx
Economic marginalization
Discrimination
Rejection
Victimization
Unmet affirmation
Negative expectations
Nondisclosure/ concealment
Internalized stigma



Fisher's exact probability tests



series of generalized regression models

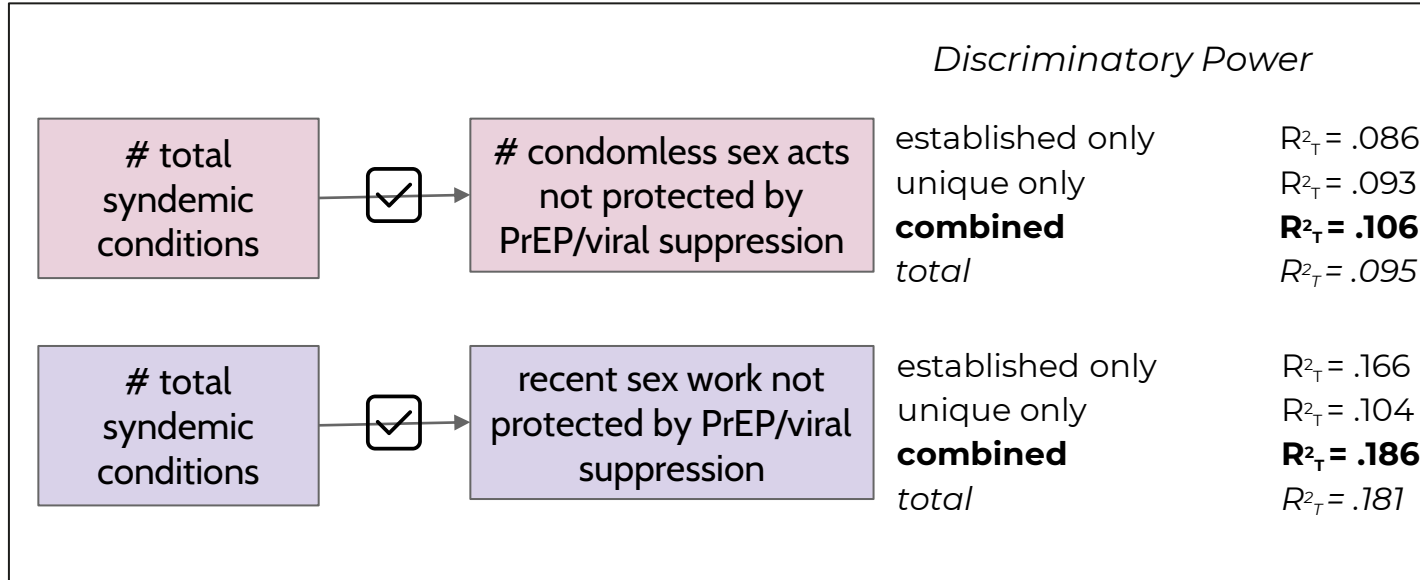
examine association between:

syndemic conditions → biobehavioral HIV acquisition/transmission risk

...as an empirical check on the proposed framework

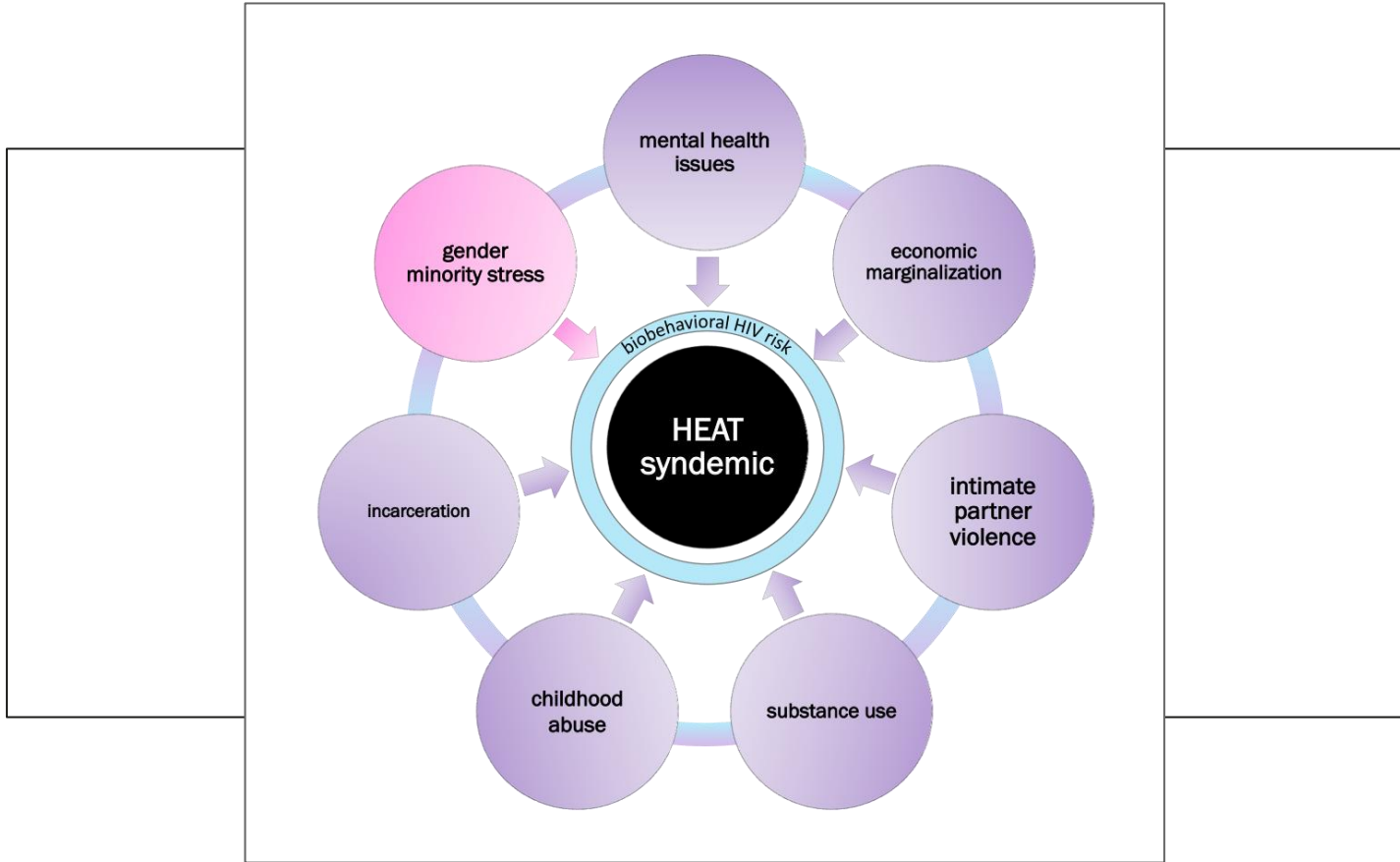
OF SYNDEMIC CONDITIONS PREDICT HIV RISK BEHAVIOR?

model better considering total # vs established and unique separately?



NOTE: needle sharing n=2

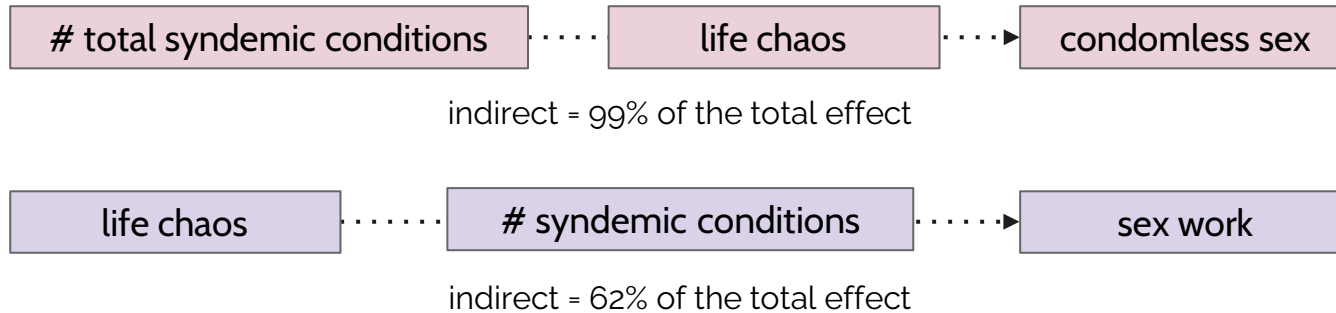
*models controlled for race & ethnicity and HIV status
no significant covariate effects*



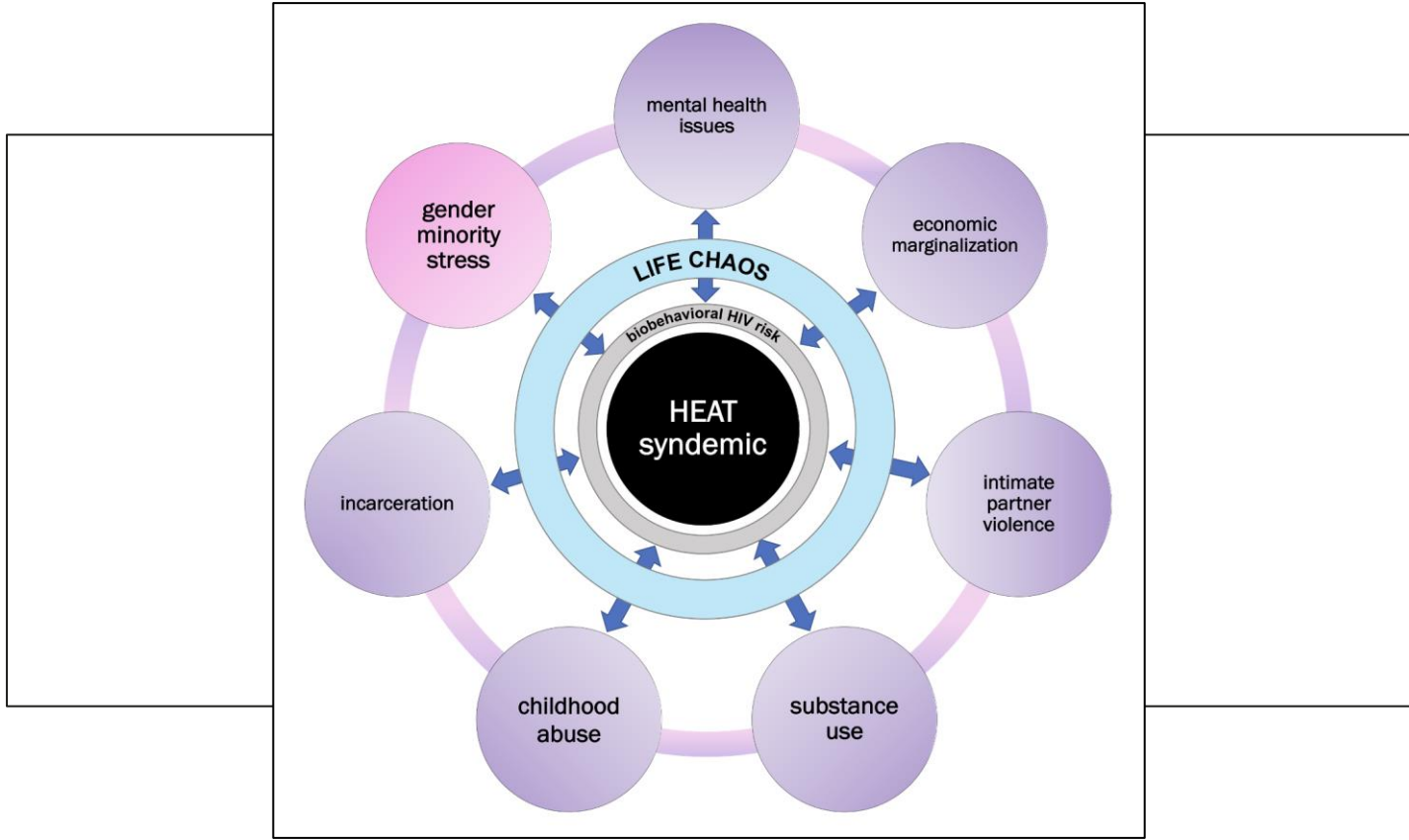
POST-HOC: LIFE CHAOS

Marginalization → Life Chaos

instability and unpredictability in daily life with subsequent inability to plan for or anticipate the future



causal inference approach



IMPLICATIONS



2025 UNAIDS targets place an emphasis on having “*people-centered and context-specific integrated approaches*”...

transgender women cannot benefit from HIV interventions if the context of their lives is not addressed.

interventions at the macro-, mezzo- and micro-level are needed

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