



THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT ON RESILIENCE IN PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV AIDS: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

PERAN DUKUNGAN SOSIAL TERHADAP RESILIENSI PADA ORANG DENGAN HIV/AIDS: TINJAUAN LITERATUR SISTEMATIS

Gusni Rahma^{1*}, Lenny Utama Afriyenti²

¹Universitas Alifiah Padang, Email: gusnirahma@gmail.com

²Universitas Bhayangkara Jakarta, Email: lenny.utama@dsn.ubharajaya.ac.id

*email koresponden: gusnirahma@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62567/micjo.v3i1.2222>

Abstract

People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) face multiple psychosocial challenges, including stigma, discrimination, and mental health problems that may reduce quality of life and treatment adherence. Resilience and psychosocial support are recognized as important protective factors that help PLWHA adapt positively to these challenges; however, existing evidence remains fragmented and has not been comprehensively synthesized. This study aimed to examine the role of psychosocial support in strengthening resilience and its implications for mental health among PLWHA through a systematic review approach. A comprehensive literature search was conducted across national and international scientific databases, including quantitative, qualitative, and review studies that addressed resilience, psychosocial support, and mental health among PLWHA, with a particular focus on Asian settings. Articles were selected based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The findings indicate that psychosocial support—such as support from family, peers, and healthcare providers—plays a significant role in enhancing resilience among PLWHA. Higher levels of resilience are consistently associated with lower levels of depression and anxiety, as well as improved psychological well-being and quality of life. In conclusion, psychosocial support is essential in strengthening resilience and promoting mental health among PLWHA, highlighting the importance of integrating psychosocial interventions into HIV/AIDS care services to support long-term well-being and adaptive coping.

Keywords : Resilience, Psychosocial Support, Mental Health, People Living with HIV/AIDS, cSystematic Review.

Abstrak

Orang yang hidup dengan HIV/AIDS (ODHA) menghadapi berbagai tantangan psikososial, termasuk stigma, diskriminasi, dan masalah kesehatan mental yang dapat mengurangi kualitas hidup dan kepatuhan pengobatan. Ketahanan dan dukungan psikososial diakui sebagai faktor pelindung penting yang membantu ODHA beradaptasi secara positif terhadap tantangan ini; namun, bukti yang ada masih terfragmentasi dan belum disintesis secara komprehensif. Studi ini bertujuan untuk meneliti peran dukungan psikososial dalam memperkuat ketahanan dan implikasinya terhadap kesehatan mental di



antara ODHA melalui pendekatan tinjauan sistematis. Pencarian literatur komprehensif dilakukan di seluruh basis data ilmiah nasional dan internasional, termasuk studi kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan tinjauan yang membahas ketahanan, dukungan psikososial, dan kesehatan mental di antara ODHA, dengan fokus khusus pada konteks Asia. Artikel dipilih berdasarkan kriteria inklusi dan eksklusi yang telah ditentukan sebelumnya. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa dukungan psikososial—seperti dukungan dari keluarga, teman sebaya, dan penyedia layanan kesehatan—memainkan peran penting dalam meningkatkan ketahanan di antara ODHA. Tingkat ketahanan yang lebih tinggi secara konsisten dikaitkan dengan tingkat depresi dan kecemasan yang lebih rendah, serta peningkatan kesejahteraan psikologis dan kualitas hidup. Kesimpulannya, dukungan psikososial sangat penting dalam memperkuat ketahanan dan meningkatkan kesehatan mental di antara ODHA, menyoroti pentingnya mengintegrasikan intervensi psikososial ke dalam layanan perawatan HIV/AIDS untuk mendukung kesejahteraan jangka panjang dan penyesuaian diri yang adaptif.

Kata Kunci : Ketahanan, Dukungan Psikososial, Kesehatan Mental, Orang yang Hidup dengan HIV/AIDS, Tinjauan Sistematis.

1. INTRODUCTION

HIV/AIDS epidemiological data shows that HIV remains a major global public health challenge. An estimated 40.8 million people are living with HIV worldwide by 2024, including 39.4 million adults and 1.4 million children, with approximately 1.3 million new infections occurring annually and 630,000 AIDS-related deaths reported globally. Despite a decline in new infections and deaths over the past few decades thanks to the expansion of antiretroviral therapy and prevention efforts, the burden of the epidemic remains high in many regions, and millions of people still lack access to HIV health services or are unaware of their infection status (UNAIDS, 2024).

In the Asia and Pacific region, the HIV epidemic is also having a significant impact. By 2024, an estimated 6.9 million people are living with HIV in Asia and the Pacific, making this region one of the most affected regions alongside Eastern and Southern Africa, and accounting for nearly a quarter of new HIV infections globally. These data illustrate that although some countries in Asia are showing a downward trend in new infections and increasing access to treatment, challenges such as transmission among key populations, stigma, and limited funding and services remain significant barriers to the HIV/AIDS response in the region (UNAIDS, 2025)(Rahma, Yulia, & Handiny, 2024).

People living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) continue to face complex and ongoing challenges, not only related to the biological aspects of the disease but also encompassing psychosocial dimensions. Stigma, discrimination, social isolation, and fear of HIV status are often sources of chronic stress that significantly impact the mental health of PLWHA. These conditions increase the risk of psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety, and psychological distress, which can ultimately reduce quality of life and hinder adherence to antiretroviral (ARV) treatment (Perger, 2025)(Dave, 2024)(Lestari, 2023).

In dealing with these pressures, resilience is a crucial psychological factor for PLWHA. Resilience is defined as an individual's ability to adapt positively, recover from difficulties, and maintain psychosocial functioning despite stressful situations. In PLWHA, resilience plays a



role in helping individuals manage the stress of stigma, maintain psychological well-being, and improve quality of life and treatment continuity (Wen et al., 2020).

Social support is a key determinant in developing and strengthening resilience in people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Social support includes emotional, informational, and instrumental support received from family, friends, peer groups, communities, and healthcare professionals. Stress-buffering theory explains that social support can protect individuals from the negative impacts of stress by improving coping skills and psychological adaptation (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Various studies have shown that people living with HIV/AIDS with high levels of social support tend to have greater resilience, lower levels of depression, and more optimal engagement in HIV care (Li et al., 2018)(Xu et al., 2017).

Empirical evidence, both internationally and nationally, demonstrates the importance of social and peer support in strengthening the resilience of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Previous studies have reported that peer-support-based interventions can increase HIV service utilization, strengthen coping skills, and support disease treatment, including in vulnerable groups such as pregnant women with HIV (Camellia et al., 2023b)(Camellia et al., 2023a)(Rahma, 2025). Furthermore, psychosocial and social factors also contribute to long-term health outcomes in people living with HIV, as reflected in indicators such as years of potential life lost (Ilmaskal et al., 2020)(Ilmaskal et al., 2021)(Rahma, Yulia, & Asyari, 2024).

Although several studies have examined the relationship between social support and resilience in people living with HIV, the existing findings use diverse designs and instruments and have not been systematically synthesized, particularly in the context of Asian countries. Therefore, a systematic literature review is needed to comprehensively examine the role of social support on resilience in people living with HIV. This systematic review is expected to provide a more structured understanding of the mechanisms of this relationship and serve as a scientific basis for the development of psychosocial interventions focused on strengthening social support and resilience in people living with HIV.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to identify and synthesize scientific evidence on the role of social support on resilience in People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), particularly in the context of Asian countries. The SLR was compiled and reported based on the PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses), which are international standards for reporting systematic reviews to improve transparency, replication, and the quality of research reporting. Articles were searched through several major scientific databases, namely PubMed and Google Scholar. These databases were selected because they provide extensive coverage of peer-reviewed scientific publications, particularly in the fields of public health, nursing, and behavioral science related to HIV/AIDS. To ensure readability and completeness of information, only free, full-text articles written in Indonesian or English were included in the selection process. A literature search was conducted using a combination of keywords in English and Indonesian,



including: "social support," "sosial support," "resilience," "resiliensi," "people living with HIV/AIDS," "PLWHA," "PLWHA," and "Asia." These keywords were combined using Boolean operators (AND, OR) to broaden the scope of the search results and accommodate the variety of terms used in scientific publications. The search period for articles was limited to the last ten years (2015–2025) to ensure the relevance of the findings to current developments in psychosocial aspects and social support in PLWHA.

The article selection process was carried out in stages, starting with title and abstract identification, followed by full-text review to ensure the substance aligns with the study's focus. Articles were included if they met the following inclusion criteria:

- (1) original research article or systematic review;
- (2) discussing the relationship between social support and/or resilience in PLWHA;
- (3) research conducted in Asia or presenting data relevant to the Asian context;
- (4) published in the 2015–2025 period;
- (5) available in full-text open access;
- (6) written in Indonesian or English; and
- (7) using a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods research design.

Articles were excluded if they only discussed clinical aspects of HIV/AIDS without addressing psychosocial factors, were narrative reviews, editorials, or opinion pieces without empirical data, were not available in full-text or could only be accessed for a fee, and were purely experimental or animal-based studies. Articles meeting all inclusion criteria were then extracted using a Microsoft Excel-based form. The variables collected included: article title, author(s), year of publication, country/location of study, study design, sample size, population characteristics, type of social support studied, resilience measurement instruments, and key findings. The extracted data were analyzed narratively and thematically to identify patterns of relationships, mechanisms of influence, and implications of social support on the resilience of PLWHA.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The literature identification process yielded 455 articles obtained from two databases: PubMed (n = 240) and Google Scholar (n = 215). All collected articles then underwent a deduplication stage to eliminate duplicate articles. At this stage, 210 duplicate articles were removed, resulting in 245 unique articles that proceeded to the screening stage. The screening stage was conducted by reviewing the titles and abstracts of the 245 articles. The screening results indicated that 150 articles were deemed relevant and met the initial research criteria. Meanwhile, 115 articles were excluded because they did not align with the established study focus. Furthermore, the 150 articles that passed the screening stage were further considered, and 35 were deemed suitable for full-text review. At the eligibility stage, an in-depth assessment of the 15 full-text articles was conducted based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Articles were excluded for several reasons, including inappropriate study population (n = 2), descriptive study design (n = 1), irrelevant study outcomes (n = 2), and inadequate



methodological information (n = 2). After systematically reviewing all the stages, eight articles were deemed to meet all inclusion criteria and were subsequently included in the final synthesis stage. The article selection process is detailed in the PRISMA 2020 flowchart, as shown in Figure 1.

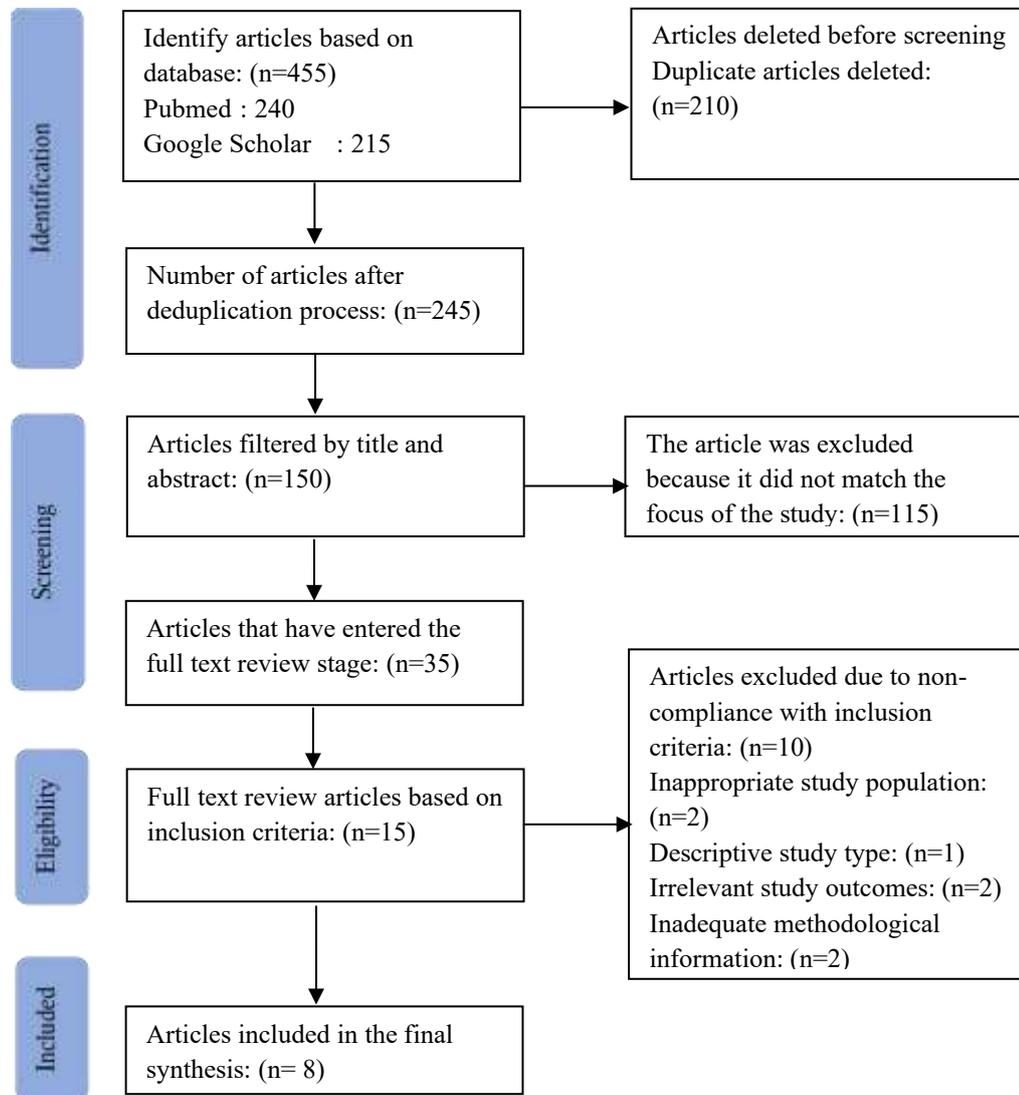


Figure 1. Flow Chart of the Systematic Review of The Role of Social Support on Resilience in People Living with HIV AIDS

Table 1. Characteristics of Included Studies (n =8)

Title and Author (Year)	Country	Study Design	Sample Size	Population	Main Findings	Risk Factors / Key Findings
Relationship between Social Support and Resilience among People	Indonesia	Quantitative, Cross-sectional	64	PLWHA	Social support showed a significant positive	Low social support → low resilience



Title and Author (Year)	Country	Study Design	Sample Size	Population	Main Findings	Risk Factors / Key Findings
Living with HIV/AIDS (Ulfa & Kusumaningrum, 2024)					correlation with resilience (p=0.000).	
Role of Resilience and Social Support on Quality of Life of PLWHA (Firman et al., 2025)	Indonesia	Quantitative, Cross-sectional	433	PLWHA	Resilience and social support were significantly associated with quality of life.	Resilience had a dominant effect; social support contributed positively
Social Support, Resilience, and HIV-Related Stress among Older PLWHA (Zhang, 2025)	China	Quantitative, Cross-sectional	405	Older PLWHA (≥50 years)	Social support and resilience contributed to reduced HIV-related stress.	Living with others strengthened the positive effects of social support and resilience
Resilience as a Mediator between Social Support and Mental Health in PLWHA (Sun, 2023)	China	Cross-sectional	161	PLWHA	Resilience mediated the relationship between social support and anxiety and depression.	Social support increased resilience, thereby reducing anxiety and depression
Social Support, Resilience, Stigma, and Depression among PLWHA (Wardojo & Rosadi, 2023)	Indonesia	Cross-sectional	~496	PLWHA	There were associations between social support, resilience, stigma, and depression.	Social support and resilience influenced depression among PLWHA
Social Support, Self-Esteem, and Quality of Life in PLWHA (Wani, 2020)	India (Jammu & Kashmir)	Cross-sectional	460	PLWHA	Social support was associated with self-esteem and quality of life.	Low social support was linked to lower quality of life
Social Support, Resilience, and ART Adherence among PLWHA	China	Cross-sectional	223	PLWHA	Social support and resilience were associated	Low social support reduced resilience and



Title and Author (Year)	Country	Study Design	Sample Size	Population	Main Findings	Risk Factors / Key Findings
(Wen et al., 2020)					with ART adherence.	treatment adherence
Social Support, Self-Esteem, Resilience, and Depression among MSM with HIV (Yan et al., 2019)	China	Cross-sectional	374	MSM with HIV	Social support, self-esteem, and resilience played roles in reducing depression.	Resilience and social support were important for mental health

a. Discussion

A review of eight quantitative cross-sectional studies conducted in Indonesia, China, and India revealed a consistent pattern of findings regarding the role of social support and resilience in people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Most studies indicate that social support has a positive and significant relationship with resilience, mental health, quality of life, and ARV treatment adherence. A study by (Ulfa & Kusumaningrum, 2024) in Indonesia demonstrated a strong positive correlation between social support and resilience ($p=0.000$), with low levels of social support associated with lower levels of resilience in PLWHA. Similar findings were also reported in studies (Wen et al., 2020) and (Yan, 2019) in China, which confirmed that social support plays a crucial role in increasing resilience and reducing depression.

Furthermore, several studies identified resilience as a key factor influencing quality of life and mental health. (Firman et al., 2025) found that resilience was the dominant factor influencing the quality of life of PLWHA, while social support played a significant supporting role. A study (Sun, 2023) reinforced these findings by demonstrating that resilience acts as a mediator between social support and mental disorders such as anxiety and depression. In specific groups, such as elderly PLWHA and MSM living with HIV, social support and resilience continued to show protective effects. (Zhang, 2025) reported that in PLWHA aged ≥ 50 years, social support and resilience contributed to reducing HIV-related stress, especially in individuals living with family members or others.

The results of this study indicate that social support is a crucial psychosocial determinant in shaping PLWHA resilience, which in turn impacts mental health, quality of life, and therapy adherence. Social support, whether in the form of emotional, instrumental, or informational support, helps PLWHA feel accepted, reduces feelings of isolation, and improves their ability to adapt to their chronic illness. Resilience has emerged as a key psychological mechanism bridging the influence of social support on various health outcomes. Findings from (Sun, 2023) and (Wen et al., 2020) indicate that social support not only has a direct impact but also works indirectly by increasing resilience, thereby reducing depression and anxiety, and improving ARV treatment adherence. This aligns with stress-buffering theory, which states that social support can strengthen an individual's capacity to cope with stress.



Findings from (Ulfa & Kusumaningrum, 2024) and (Wardojo & Rosadi, 2023) report that low social support remains a real problem impacting the resilience and mental health of PLWHA (Women with HIV/AIDS), primarily due to persistent social stigma. This stigma has the potential to hinder PLWHA's access to supportive social networks, thereby weakening coping skills and increasing the risk of depression. For special populations such as elderly PLWHA and MSM living with HIV, social support becomes even more crucial. A study (Zhang, 2025) showed that living with others enhances the positive effects of social support and resilience, indicating the importance of an inclusive social environment. Meanwhile, (Yan, 2019) emphasized that the combination of social support, self-esteem, and resilience is crucial in maintaining the mental health of MSM living with HIV, who are vulnerable to multiple stigmas. Social support serves as a psychosocial resource that enables PLWHA to build resilience and maintain psychological balance in the face of HIV-related stress. Findings from Indonesia and Asia indicate that emotional and instrumental support strengthens adaptive capacity, reduces the impact of stress, and supports continued engagement in care and adherence to ARV therapy.

Overall, these results indicate that HIV interventions should not focus solely on clinical aspects but should integrate psychosocial approaches, such as strengthening family, peer, and community support. Developing resilience-based mentoring programs and social support has the potential to sustainably improve the quality of life of PLWHA.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research synthesis, it can be concluded that social support plays a crucial role in enhancing resilience in people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), which in turn positively impacts mental health, quality of life, and treatment adherence. Strong social support from family, peers, and the social environment has been shown to be associated with higher levels of resilience and reduced stress, anxiety, and depression, and even serves as a protective factor against the impact of HIV stigma. Conversely, low social support is consistently associated with lower resilience, increased psychological distress, decreased quality of life, and poorer adherence to antiretroviral therapy. Therefore, strengthening social support and resilience needs to be an integral part of comprehensive interventions and services for PLWHA, particularly in Asian social and cultural contexts.

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