

# Innovative pre-exposure prophylaxis interventions among adolescent girls and young women during Covid-19 lockdown period in Sub-Saharan Africa: A systematic review

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## Key Findings:

- # The use of social media platforms, decentralizing pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) through community delivery, and multi-month dispensing of PrEP were identified across Sub-Saharan (SSA) countries.
- # Various intervention implementers highlighted significant challenges like adaptation and a lack of human capacity while implementing innovative interventions.
- # However, significant improvements in PrEP uptake and adherence were observed.
- # A gap in the existing literature regarding innovative PrEP interventions implemented among adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) lockdown was highlighted.
- # The improvement of PrEP service delivery among AGYW will assist in the reduction of new HIV infections.
- # Therefore, more efforts are urgently needed to address the challenges of these interventions to mitigate HIV infections among AGYW and to prepare for future pandemics.

## BACKGROUND

- Adolescent girls and young women are key, and priority populations impacted by a higher risk of acquiring HIV [1].
- In 2022, they accounted for more than 77% of all new HIV infections in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) [1].
- To curb these incidence rates, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) was introduced as a biomedical HIV prevention tool in 2015 [2].
- However, its uptake continues to be lower in SSA countries, particularly among AGYW [3].
- The uptake of PrEP may have worsened during the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions.
- Some innovative interventions were implemented to improve PrEP uptake among AGYW during the Covid-19 lockdown [4].
- However, there is limited empirical data regarding the successes and challenges of these interventions.

## AIM

- This review aimed to identify and describe the innovative PrEP interventions implemented during the Covid-19 lockdown period among AGYW in SSA countries.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Which innovative PrEP interventions were implemented for service continuity during the Covid-19 lockdown period among AGYW in SSA countries?
- How feasible and accessible were these innovative PrEP interventions among AGYW?
- Can these innovative PrEP interventions be sustained in the long term?

## METHODS

- The review was written according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis guidelines and registered under the International Prospective Register of Systematic Reviews (reference no: CRD42023439020).
- The literature search used multiple online databases such as PubMed, Scopus, Google Scholar, and MEDLINE between 01 April 2019 and 30 April 2024.
- All the retrieved articles were imported into the Covidence Software.
- Included studies were narratively summarized and presented in tabular format.

## RESULTS

All the included articles are shown below

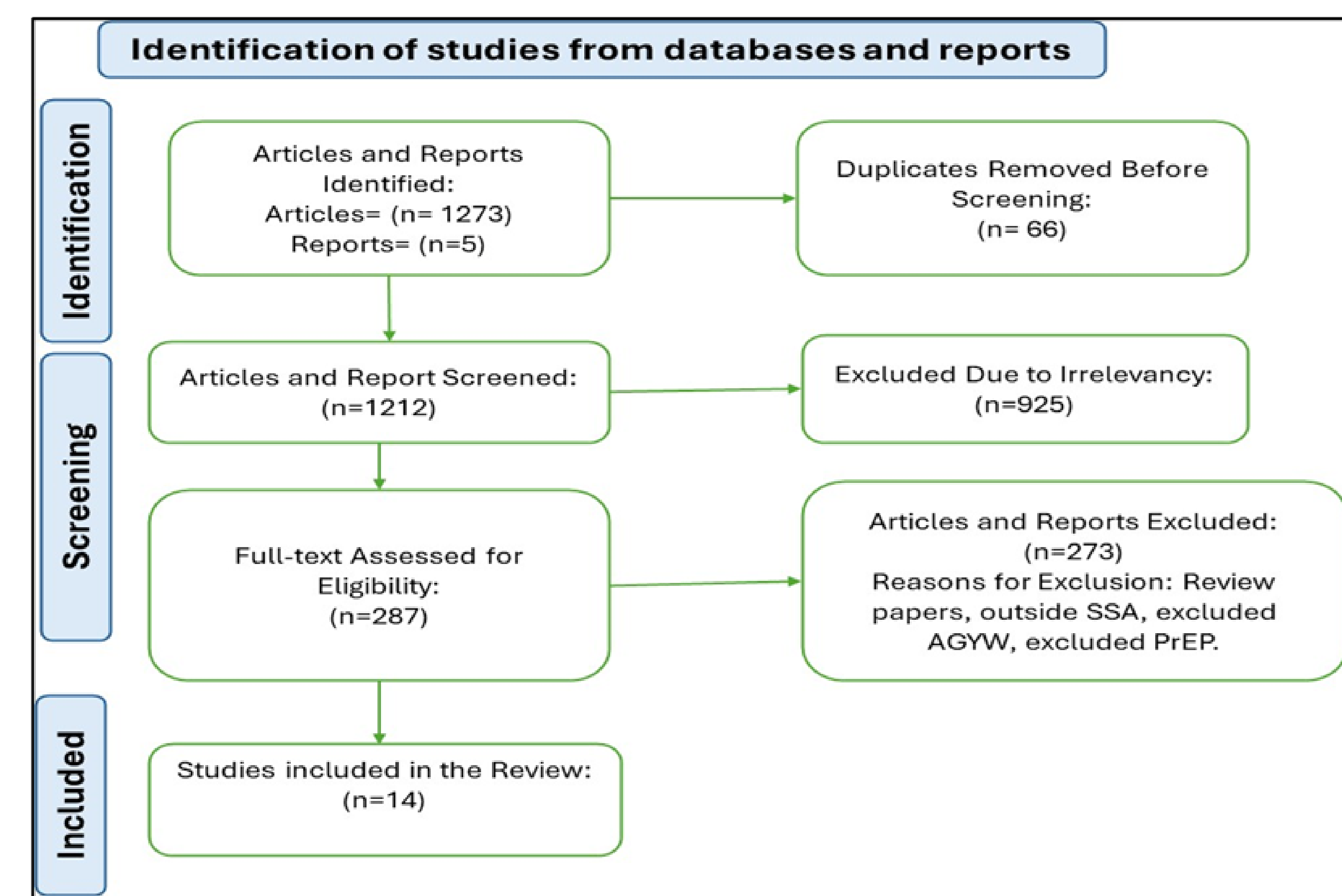


Figure 1: PRISMA flow diagram representing the selection processes of articles

Figures 2-5 display the characteristics of the included studies on innovative interventions during the lockdown period

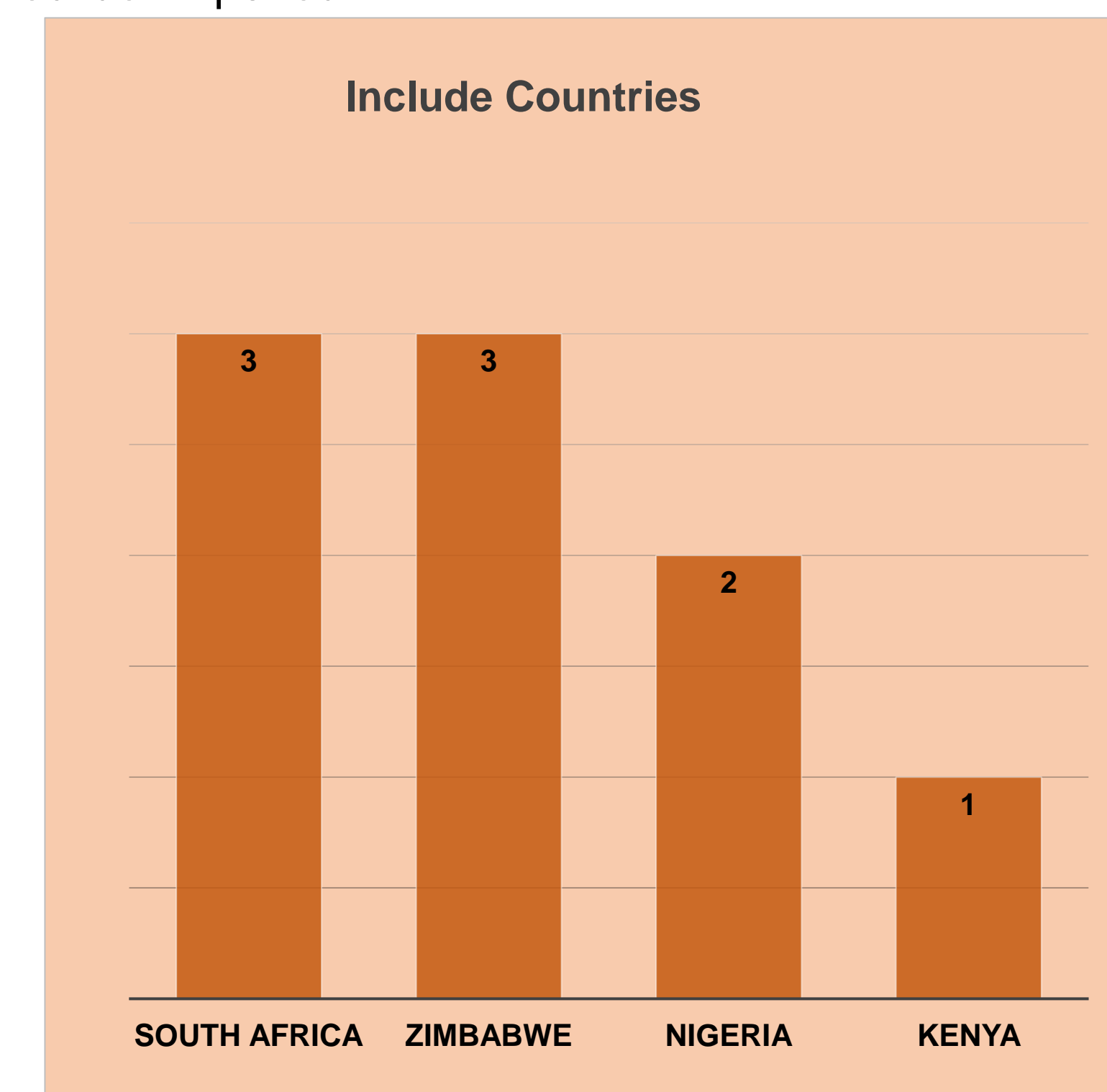


Figure 2: The included Sub-Saharan countries

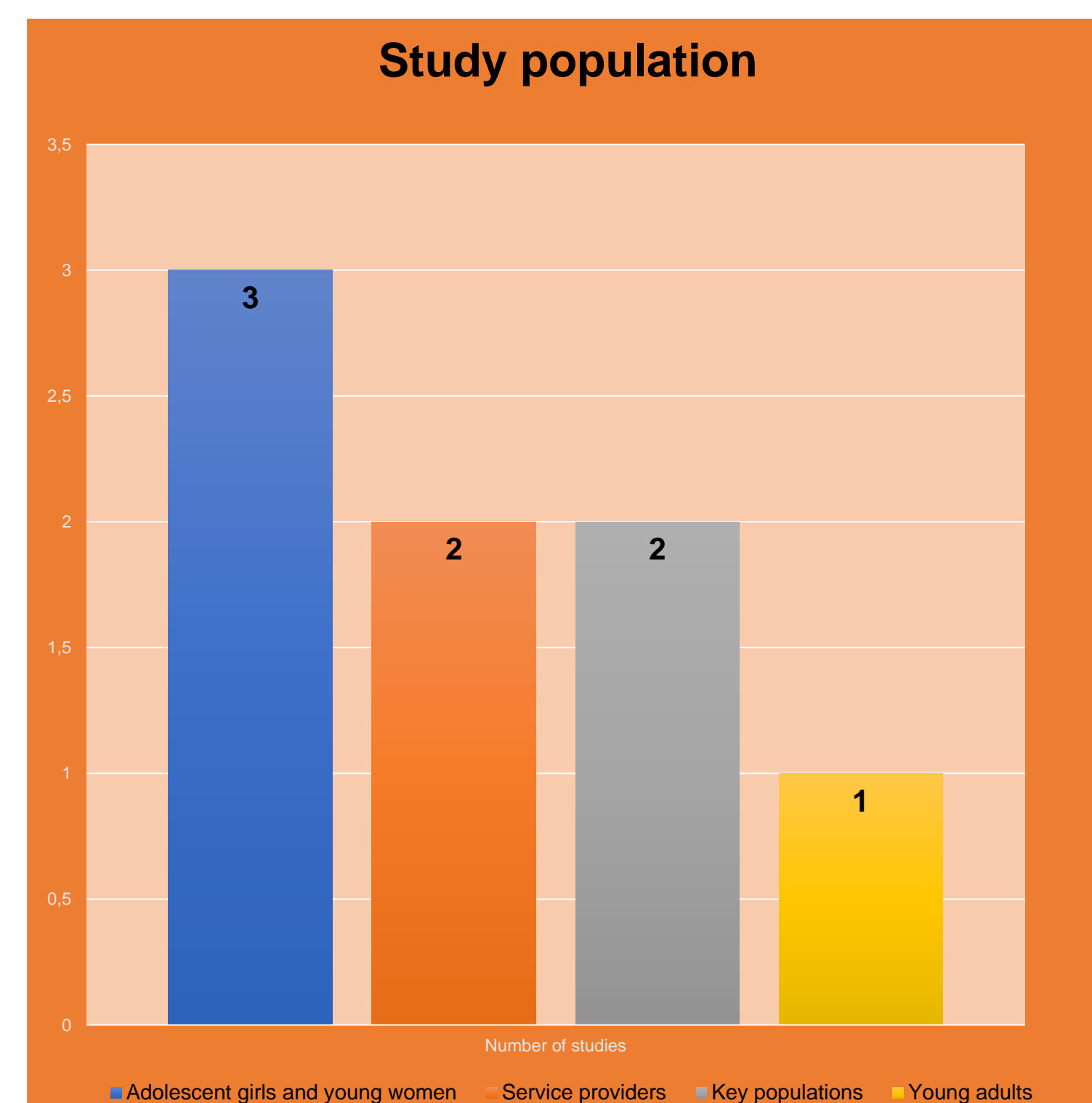


Figure 3: Study populations

## RESULTS CONTINUED

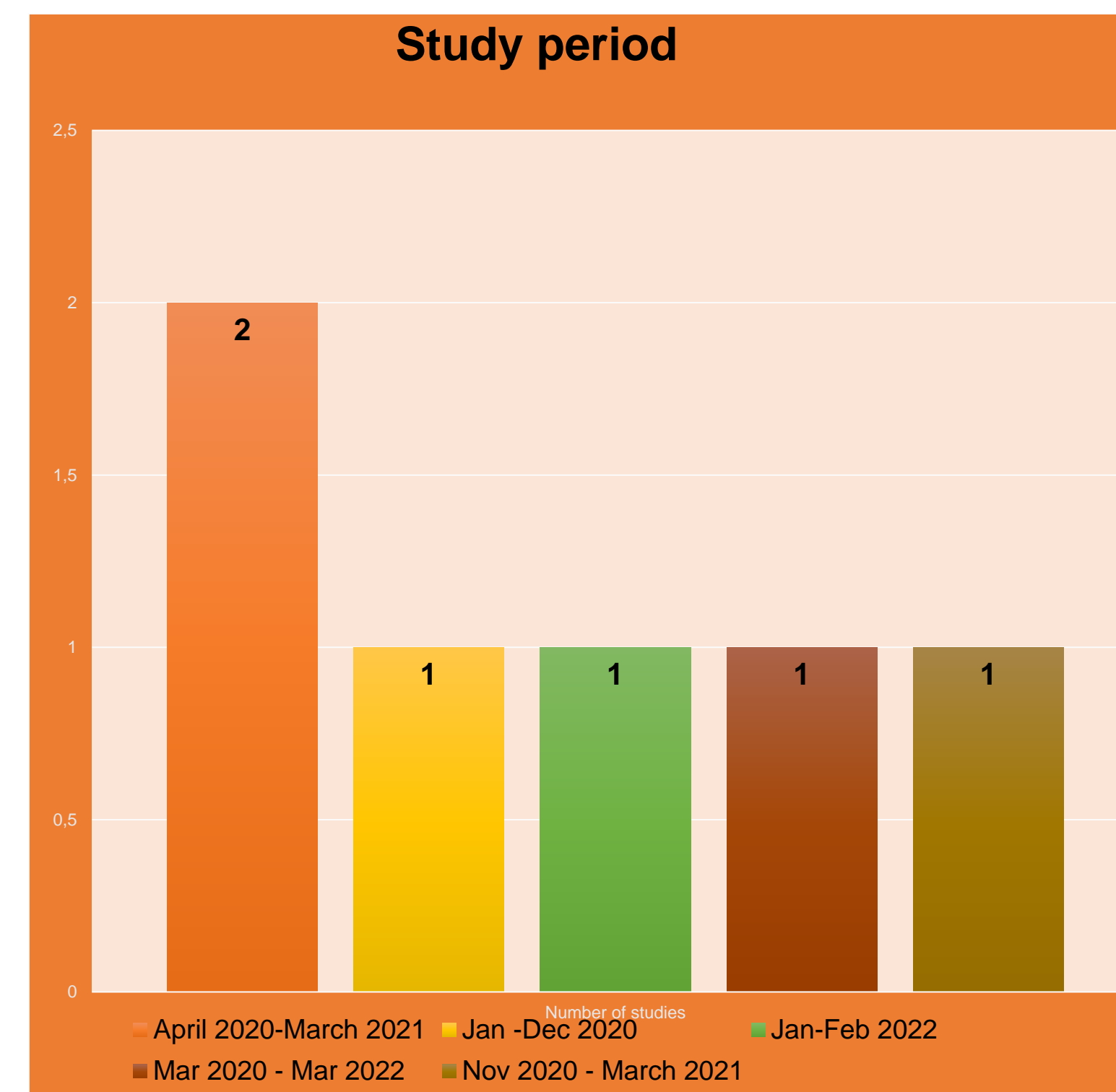


Figure 4: Study period

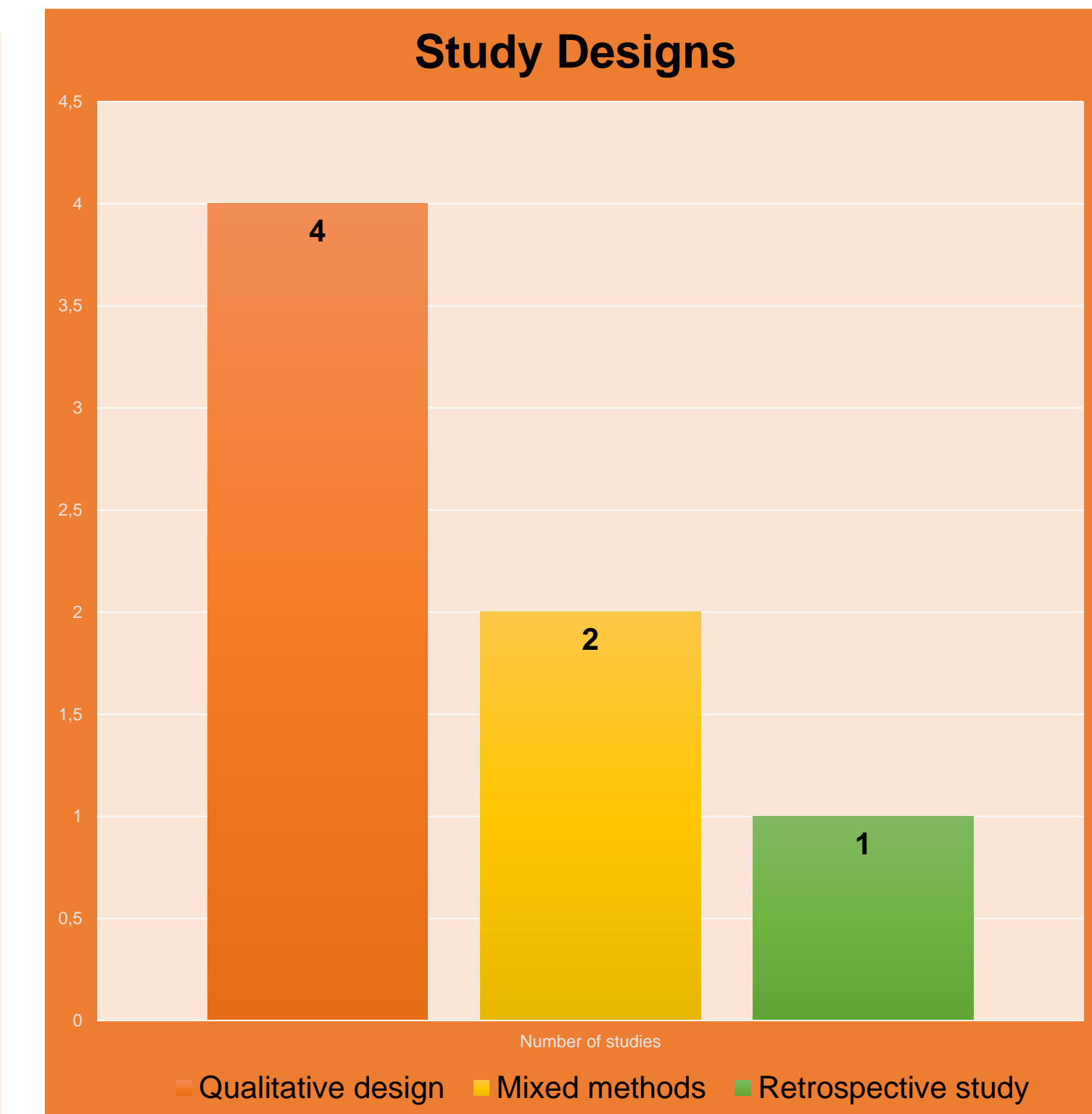


Figure 5: Employed study designs

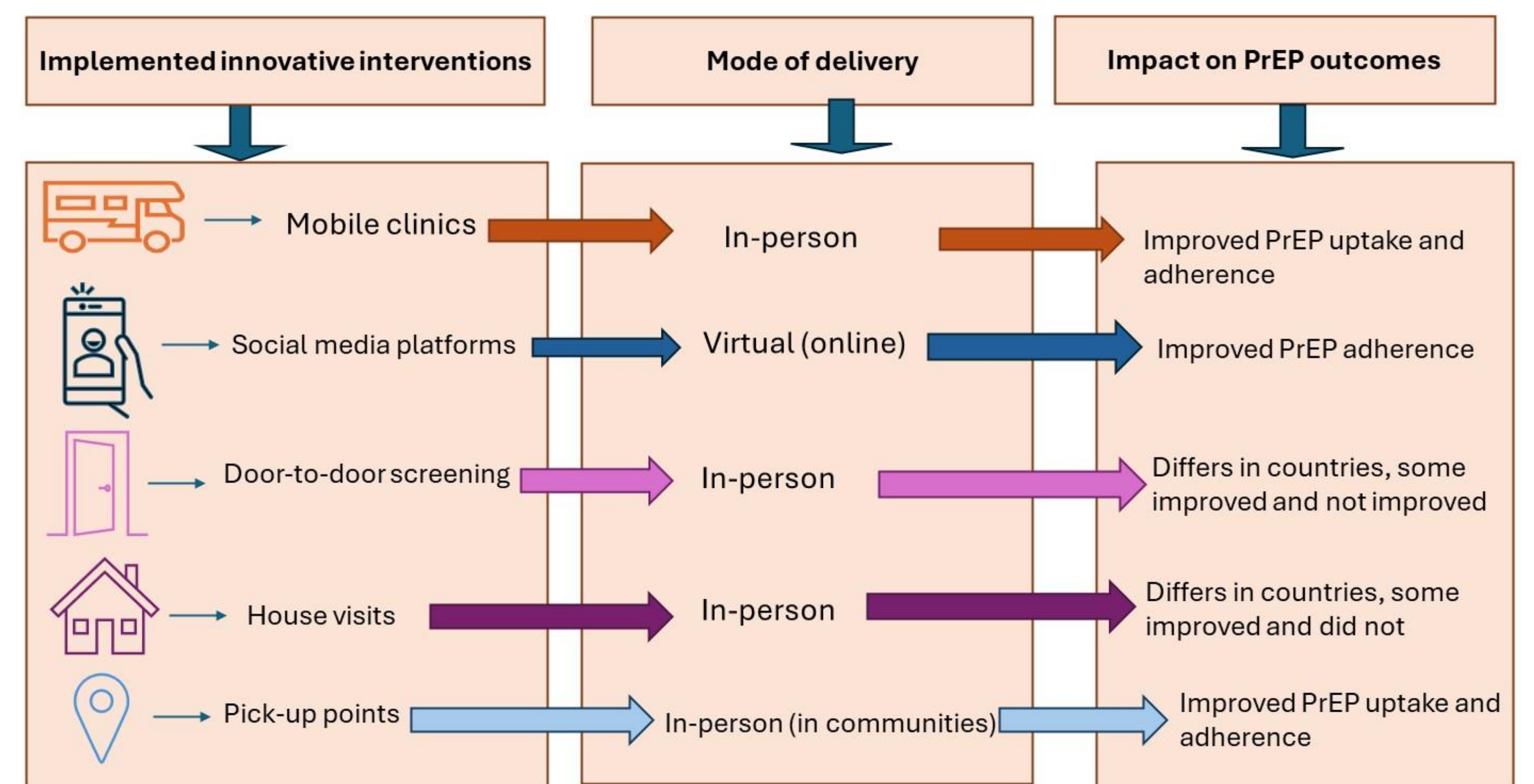


Figure 6: Implemented innovative interventions, mode of delivery, and impact on pre-exposure prophylaxis services

## CONCLUSIONS

- The findings revealed that the Covid-19 lockdown period has indeed disrupted the HIV services among key populations including AGYW.
- During this time, accessibility was highlighted as a significant element that hindered the uptake and adherence of PrEP which has also been the case even before the pandemic.
- However, through these disruptions, opportunities were provided to implement and upscale innovative interventions that were thought to be costly and unfeasible.
- These interventions improved services, particularly among key populations including AGYW.
- Furthermore, these innovations showed that they can potentially succeed if they can be continued across SSA countries.

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