

Challenges related to access to STI services among MSM migrants from the Russian Federation who moved to Georgia after the Russia-Ukraine war

Papuna Lomouri

Master's Thesis is submitted to Ilia State University Faculty of Natural Sciences and Medicine;

MPH program Public Health and Health Policy

Project Supervisor: Nino Mirzikashvili, Associate Professor

Ilia State University

Tbilisi 2025

Acknowledgements

I am sincerely grateful to my supervisor, Nino Mirzikashvili, whose guidance, encouragement, and thoughtful insights have been invaluable throughout the course of this research. Her expertise and steady support have greatly contributed to the development and completion of this thesis. I wish to thank all the individuals who participated in this study. Your openness and willingness to share your experiences provided the foundation for this work. I am also appreciative of the resources and academic environment offered by Ilia State University, which enabled me to pursue this research. Finally, I would like to acknowledge everyone who, in various ways, assisted and inspired me along the way. Your contributions, whether large or small, have been deeply appreciated.

Table of Contents

<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Research Aim</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Literature review</i>	<i>3</i>
Migration and Healthcare Access.....	<i>3</i>
STI Risk and Healthcare Access Among MSM.....	<i>5</i>
Socio-Epidemiological Context of Russia and Georgia	<i>7</i>
<i>Methodology</i>	<i>12</i>
Study Design	<i>12</i>
Data Collection	<i>14</i>
Data Analysis	<i>15</i>
Ethical Consideration	<i>15</i>
<i>Results</i>	<i>16</i>
Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the participants	<i>16</i>
Bivariate and Comparative Analyses Results	<i>20</i>
STI Knowledge and Anxiety about Test Results.....	<i>20</i>
Legal Status and STI Services: Barriers, Provider Attitudes, and Anxiety.....	<i>20</i>
Duration of Residence and Avoidance of STI Testing.....	<i>22</i>
Fear of Judgment Across Age Groups.....	<i>22</i>
Binary Logistic Regression Model Predicting STI Testing Behavior	<i>23</i>
Narrative Accounts from Survey Participants	<i>25</i>
<i>Discussion</i>	<i>26</i>
Structural Vulnerabilities and Psychosocial Barriers.....	<i>27</i>
Legal Status and its Implications	<i>29</i>
<i>Limitations</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Conclusion</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Bibliography</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Annex</i>	<i>38</i>