



Romantic Relationships in Youth with Long Term Physical Health Conditions: A Scoping Review

Victoria Pizzamiglio¹, Paula Forgeron¹, Abbie Jordan², Bernie Carter³, Karine Fournier⁴, Danniella Battagin¹

PURPOSE

Scoping review: The aim of this scoping review is to identify, map and synthesize the literature concerning romantic relationships experienced by young people with long term physical health conditions. Specifically, this review will identify (1) what is known in this area, (2) gaps in the literature and (3) directions for future research.

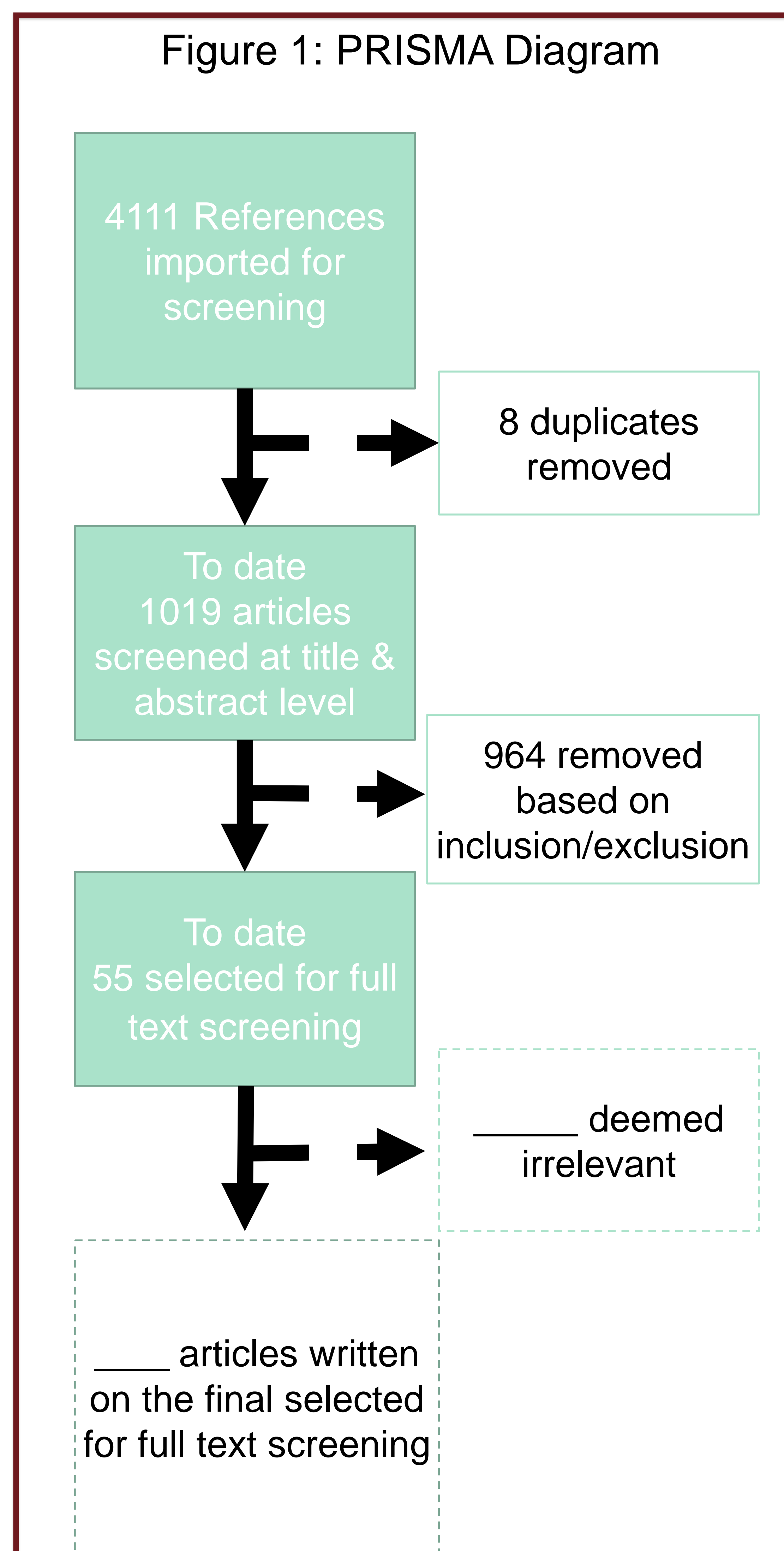
UROP: To develop a deeper understanding of the research process by learning to conduct systematic searches of major healthcare databases, utilize systematic (scoping review) software, and assist with protocol implementation by screening articles to select those that are relevant.

RELEVANCE

Romantic relationships are key relationships during adolescence and emerging adulthood as they provide individuals with companionship, social and emotional support and contribute to healthy social development. These relationships help one learn about communication, empathy, identity, and sexual development.

Young people with chronic conditions have higher rates of absenteeism and less exposure to social conditions where they may have the opportunity to create these relationships (Dowsett & Colby, 1997). As a result those with chronic physical conditions may have reduced interactions with friends (platonic and romantic) which can lead to isolation, loneliness, and depressive symptoms (Drachler et al., 2009). Moreover, if it is challenging to establish and maintain romantic relationship for young people with chronic physical conditions this may continue into adulthood increasing their risk for loneliness and social isolation, which has been shown to increase morbidity and mortality (Holt-Lunstad & Smith, 2012).

The findings from this review will highlight the challenges these young people experience in their romantic relationships, suggest areas for future research, and inform the design and testing of strategies to help overcome these challenges.



METHOD

Arskey and O'Malley's framework for scoping reviews guided this study. Database searches were conducted in CINAHL, Embase, Ovid Medline, PsychInfo, and Web of Science.

Focused tutorials (online, articles, and meetings with library specialist, and researchers) on scoping reviews and software use were completed.

Software (Covidence) is being used to screen over 4000 articles using inclusion and exclusion criteria developed collaboratively amongst members of the team. After initial screening at the title and abstract level with discrepancies reviewed, full text review will be performed to finalize articles for inclusion. Data extraction and synthesis will be done on included articles.

Inclusion criteria: 1) primary research; 2) focus on romantic relationships; 3) study population aged 11-25 years; 3) population has chronic physical health conditions; 4) English publication.

Exclusion criteria: 1) reviews, editorials, letters, conference proceedings, case reports, commentaries, books, and book chapters; 2) study population diagnosed with cognitive impairment; 3) primary focus is on mental health conditions in young people; 4) focus on platonic friendships and peer relationships.

UROP Progress to Date: Completed video tutorials of Covidence screening software, completed tutorials (including targeted reading of articles) of scoping reviews. Attended regular meeting with researchers to better understand scoping reviews, assist in developing inclusion/exclusion criteria. Underwent initial preliminary supervised screening to ensure there is a concrete knowledge of inclusion and exclusion criteria and use of software. Screening has begun, to date 1019 articles have been screened.

Next Steps: Complete screening of remaining articles, conduct full article review of selected articles, finalize PRISMA diagram. Assist with data extraction and analysis.

References:

1. Arksey, H. and O'Malley, L. (2005) Scoping studies: towards a methodological framework. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 8(1), pp. 19–32. doi: 10.1080/1364557032000119616.
2. Dowsett, E. G., & Colby, J. (1997). Long-Term Sickness Absence Due to ME/CFS in UK Schools. *Journal of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome*, 3(2), 29-42. doi:10.1300/j092v03n02_04
3. Drachler, M. D., Leite, J. C., Hooper, L., Hong, C. S., Pheby, D., Nacul, L., . . . Poland, F. (2009). The expressed needs of people with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/Myalgic Encephalomyelitis: A systematic review. *BMC Public Health*, 9(1). doi:10.1186/1471-2458-9-458
4. Holt-Lunstad, J., & Smith, T. B. (2012). Social Relationships and Mortality. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 6(1), 41-53. doi:10.1111/j.1751-9004.2011.00406.x

1. School of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa
2. Department of Psychology, University of Bath, UK
3. Faculty of Health and Social Care, Edge Hill University, UK
4. Health Sciences Library, University of Ottawa