

PERCEPTION AND COMMUNICATION OF HEALTH RISK IN SUBSTANCE DEPENDENCE POPULATIONS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

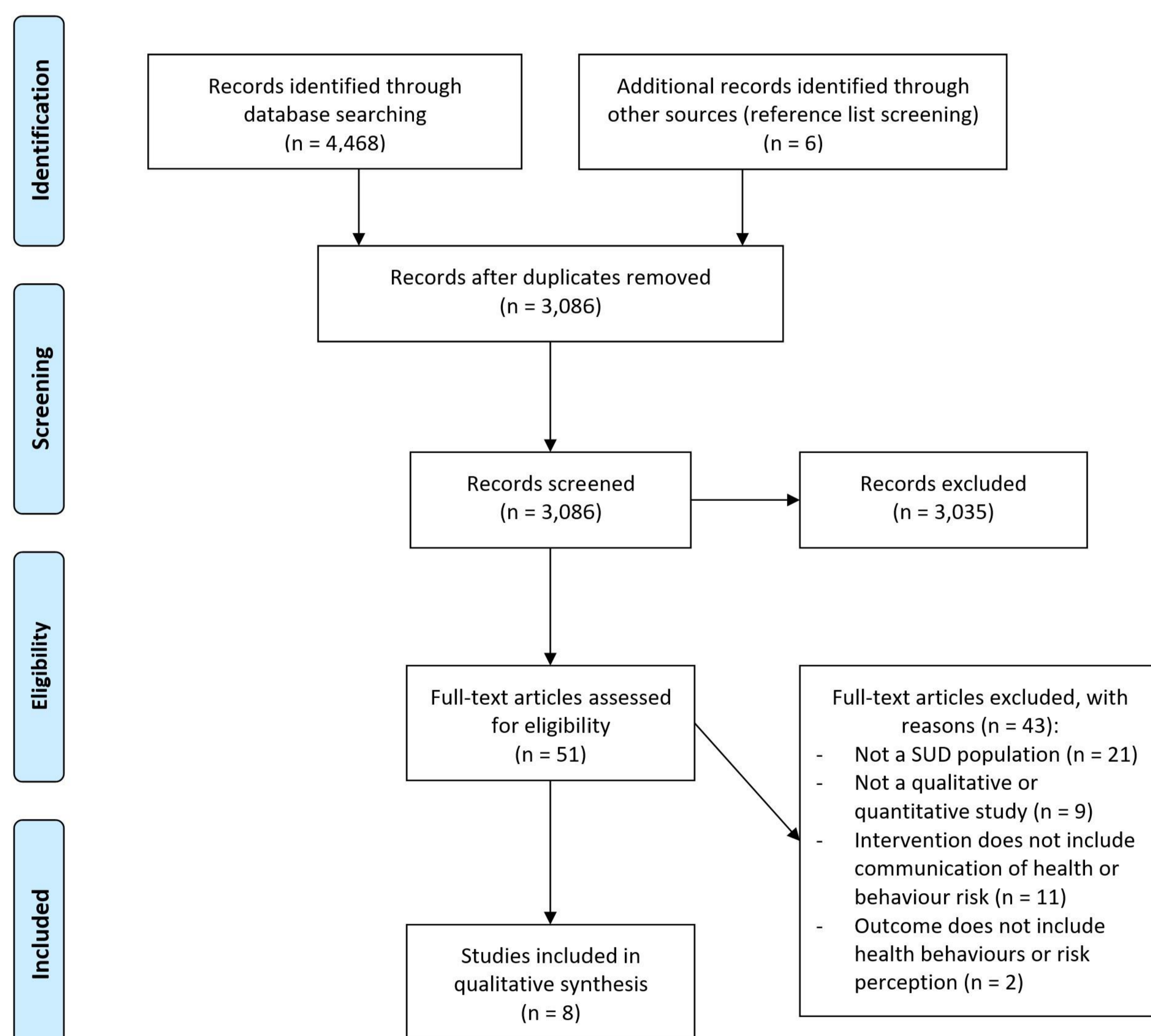
- Substance dependence population are at greater risk of chronic diseases due to their unhealthy lifestyle behaviours and inaccurate perception of risk;
- Increasing evidence that health risk communication is crucial in improving risk perception and knowledge of chronic diseases, and both factors are associated with health behaviour change;
- Previous systematic reviews on risk communication have focused only on studies in the general population.

AIM: The aim of this systematic review was to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of evidence on health risk communication in people with substance dependence.

METHODS

- A systematic search was conducted and empirical sources were identified from the databases MEDLINE, PsycINFO, CINAHL, and Scopus for all publications preceding January 2019;
- Studies were screened against pre-defined criteria (see PRISMA Flow Diagram);
- Data was extracted from the included studies and a narrative synthesis of the results was conducted;
- A meta-analysis was not feasible due to the heterogeneity in study outcomes and small number of studies included.

RESULTS



PRISMA Flow Diagram

Message Framing Effects

- Gain-framed messages focused on benefits of quitting smoking while loss-framed messages focused on the costs/disadvantages of smoking.
- Gain-framed messages rated to be more positive as compared to loss-framed messages.

Message Framing on Smoking Cessation Related Outcomes

- Inconclusive results on the effectiveness of message framing Effects of gain-framed messages did not persist in the long-term.
- Contradictory evidence that loss-framed messages were more effective in increasing participants' desire to quit as compared to gain-framed messages.
- Gain-framed messages more effective among smokers with higher nicotine dependence scores.

KEY FINDINGS

- Eight articles, representing 6 unique studies, were included in the review;
- Studies evaluated various types of health risk communication across smoking cessation, illicit drug use, and HIV risk behaviours outcome measures;
- Health risk was communicated via an array of methods, which included telephone counselling, videos, handouts and group sessions;
- Results from individual studies revealed that message framing, specifically gain-framed messages, and psychoeducation had a positive impact on smoking cessation and HIV risk behaviours and knowledge;
- Higher perceived risk of smoking cessation associated with fewer mean days to first cigarette.

CONCLUSION

- The limited number of studies provided some evidence that health risk communication promotes smoking cessation.
- Studies included were characterized by heterogeneous methods, therefore the superiority of any single method for communicating health risk was not established.
- Future research either replicate current study designs and methods or use similar outcome variables/measures.
- Good quality RCTs comparing different risk presentation methods and mediums are needed to examine whether peoples' intentions, perceptions and understanding of risk vary by these formats.