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Egyptian eMental Health (EMH) Strategy Report: Systematic Review

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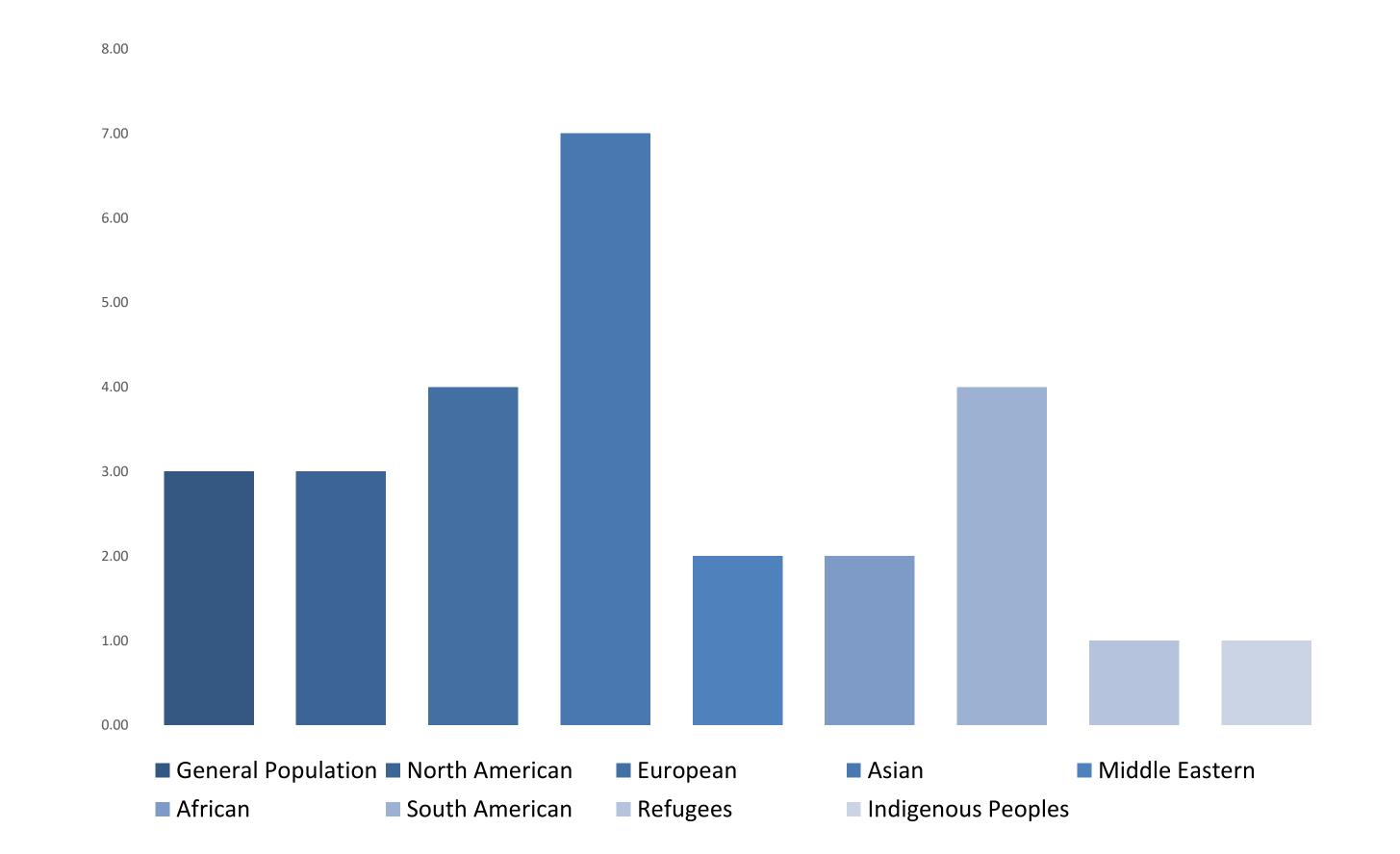
Background

- The global mental health burden compounded with the pandemic and lack of knowledge pertaining to eMental Health (EMH) strategies has served to further elucidate its significance. Consequently, there is greater support to further the research surrounding the efficacy of EMH strategies, and their implications.
- Currently there is a large global burden of mental disorders around the world. This is especially the case within vulnerable populations within low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). eMental Health strategies can serve to improve the quality and delivery of care, along with improving health outcomes within marginalized populations.
- Despite previous research on EMH strategies, there is limited knowledge and consensus pertaining to the successful implementation and adoption of eMental Health strategies.

Objectives

- The objective of our systematic review is to establish key information pertaining to the successful implementation, improvement and adoption of eMental Health strategies, along with highlighting prevalent challenges.
- To determine key strategies, our review focused on the following literature:
 - 1. Existing national EMH guidelines and policies
 - 2. International experiences with existing EMH strategies
 - 3. Existing EMH strategies in various countries (low and middle-income countries)
 - 4. Existing infrastructure for governments.

Figure 2. Population Distribution



Methods

- This systematic review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Metal-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. A detailed description of the search methodology is demonstrated in Figure 1.
- The inclusion criteria included: Peer-reviewed studies written in English, existing national EMH Strategies, government funded EMH strategies, wide-range EMH platforms, and EMH policies and protocols. Relevant MH strategies were also included.
- The exclusion criteria included: Small sample size (>200), specialized interventions, feasibility and effectiveness studies.

Results

- 11 out of 17 studies discussed differences between populations, resulting in marginalization and inequities, insufficient capacity of human resources, knowledge, training and confidence as the main challenges when creating an EMH strategy.
- Asian and Asia-Pacific populations were the focus of 7 out of 17 studies (Figure.
 2), and only 1 out of 17 studies was done exclusively on the healthcare providers' perspectives.
- The characteristics of EMH strategies, such as accessibility and convenience were primarily explored in 5 out of 17 studies.
- 6 out of 17 studies highlighted key EMH needs, such as advancing implementation, considering cost efficiencies and effectiveness, focusing on under-served populations, and implementing blended and stepped-care approaches in programs of care.



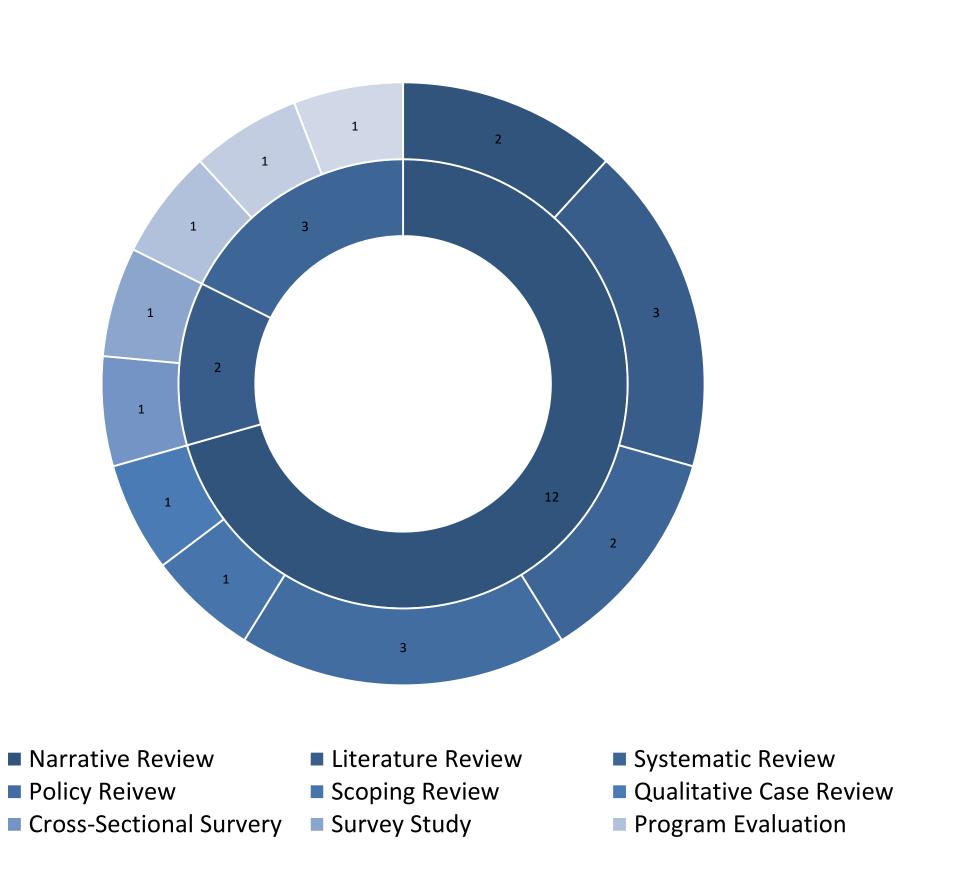
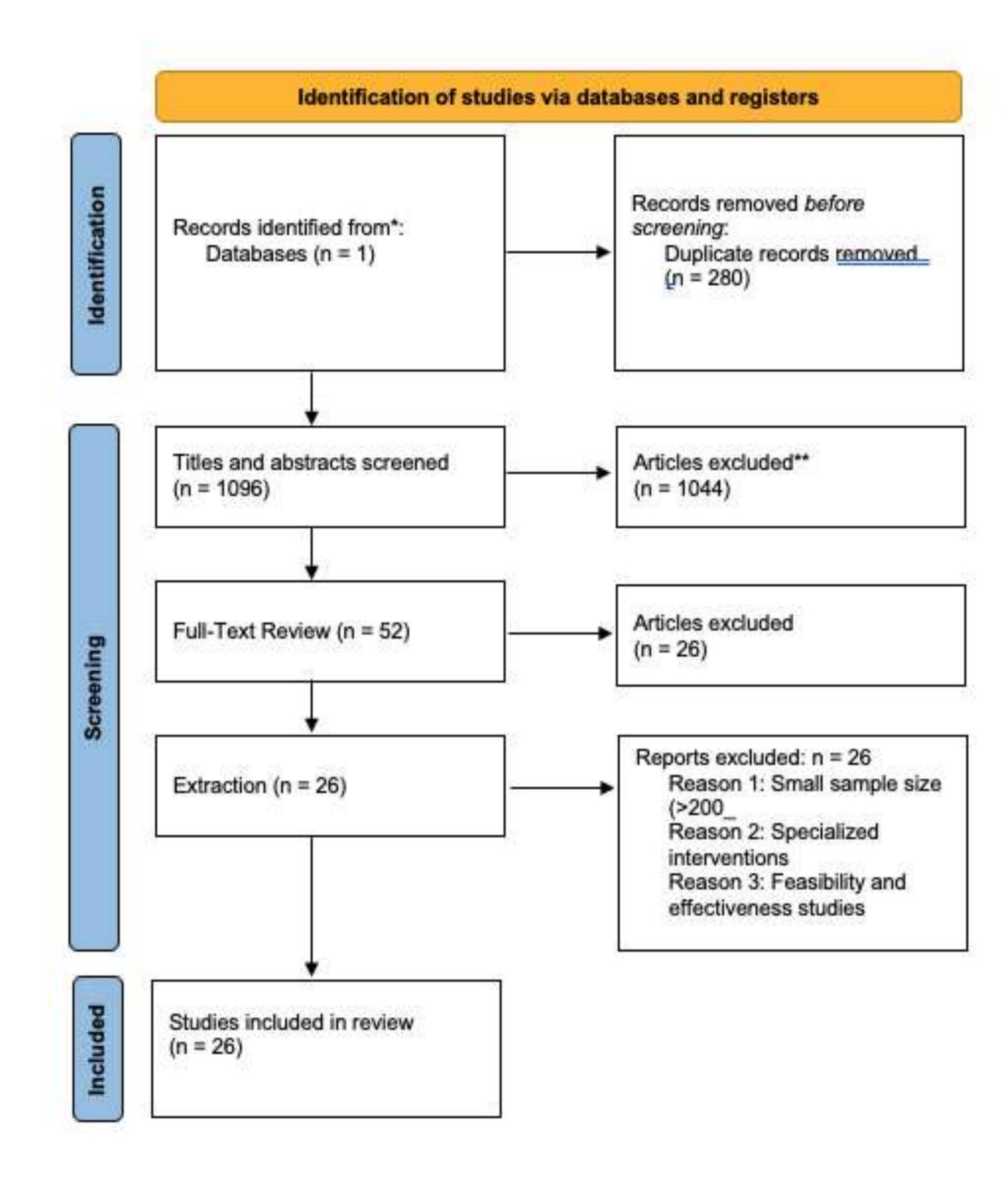


Figure 1. Search Strategy



Conclusions and Recommendations

This review identified the main challenges and needs that should be addressed in order to create successful EMH strategies in low- and middle-income countries. Differences between populations and related issues, such as inequities, resources, and provider training were recognized in majority of studies.

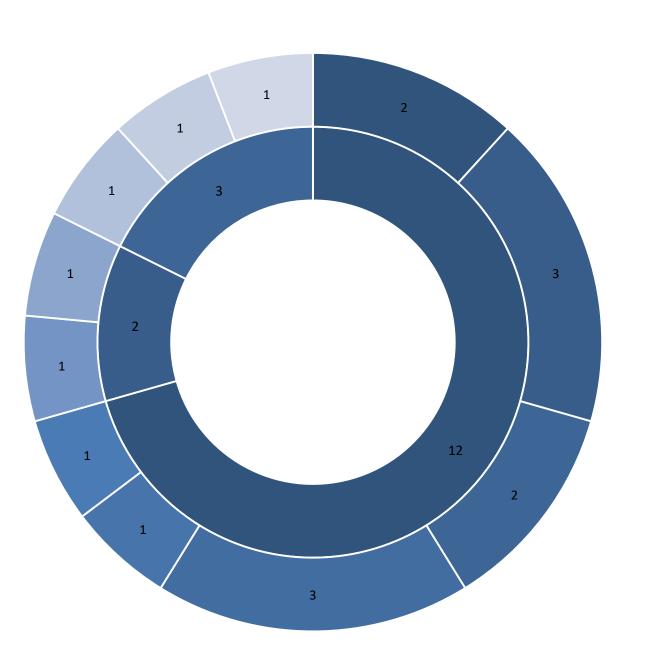
The key general recommendations that were derived from these studies are:

- 1. Further implementation, training and research is needed
- 2. Support research and application through continual funding and political support
- 3. Further dissemination of EMH resources
- 4. Addressing both the needs and gaps for vulnerable populations, for example, lack of access/usability and stigma.
- 5. Further advancement of EMH technologies / development of novel EMH technology
- 6. Assessing the efficacy of novel and existing EMH tools and strategies
- 7. Further oversight and monitoring of EMH strategies
- 8. Further EMH policy advancements





Figure 2. Study Distribution



Narrative Review
 Scoping Review
 Program Evaluation
 Literature Review
 Systematic Review
 Cross-Sectional Survery
 Survey Study
 Focus Group Study