

Psychosocial Factors of Physical Activity Participation among Midlife Immigrant Women: A Systematic Review

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INTRODUCTION

- Immigrant women are less likely to be physically active and face many barriers to participation in physical activity^{1,2}
- The lack of participation in physical activity among immigrant women necessitates the implementation of unique and culturally appropriate health interventions to maintain health^{3,4}
- There is a lack of research on the experiences of immigrant women in their midlife

OBJECTIVES

To identify the influencing factors as well as adaption approaches of physical activity participation among midlife immigrant women.

METHODS

A systematic review was conducted based on the PRISMA guidelines.

Inclusion criteria:

- Had studied immigrant women
- Included participants who were in the middle-age life period, from 40 to 64 years old OR in perimenopausal
- Investigated interventions with components of physical activity or associated influencing factors towards engaging in physical activity interventions
- Were published in an English peer-reviewed journal
- Were published during or after the year 2000

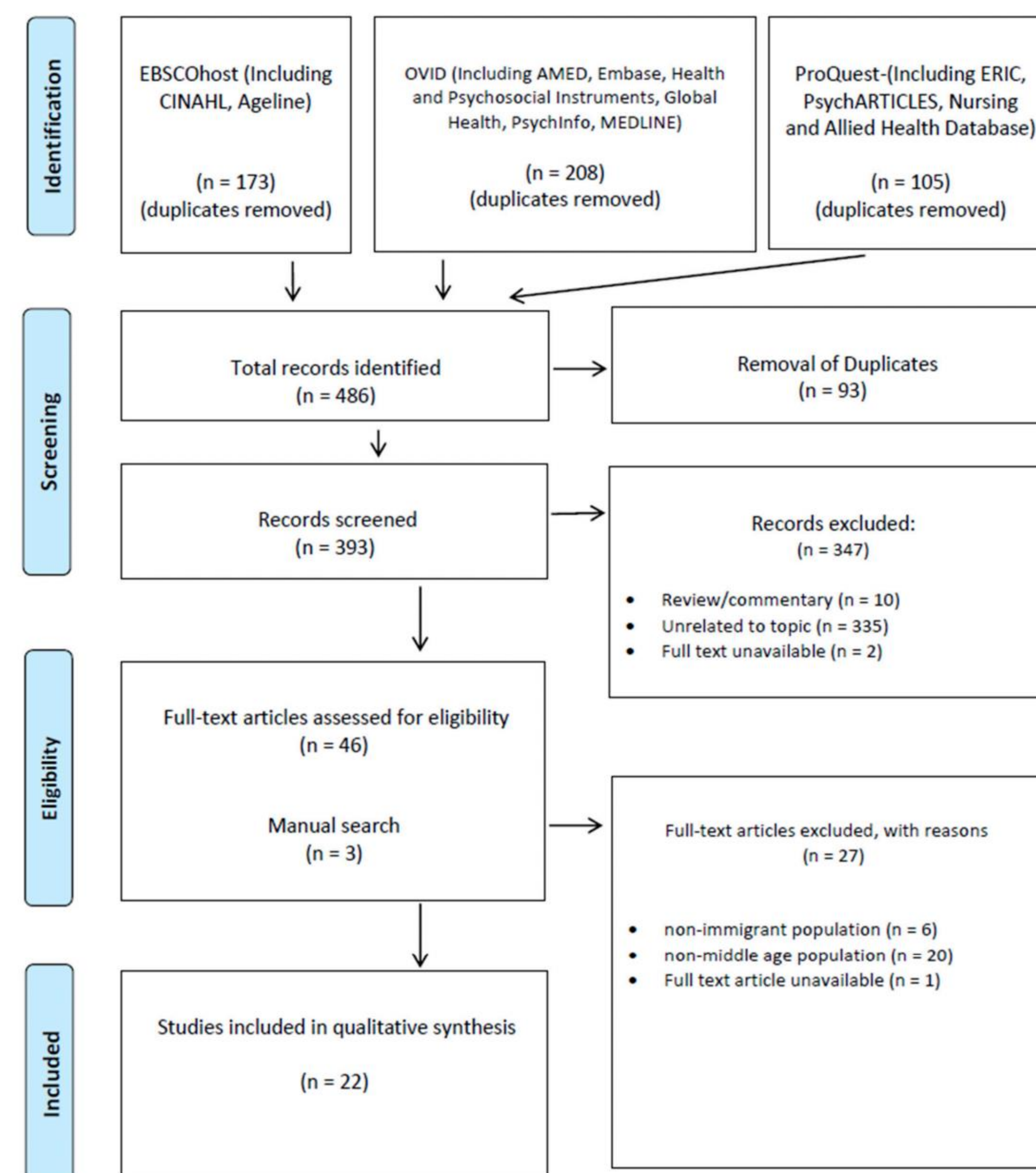
The databases searched included various health-related, psychological, sociological and educational science databases.

Data analysis guided by Ecosocial theory:

- Independent thematic analysis by 2 reviewers
- Data was broadly categorized at the individual, familial and community levels

RESULTS

Figure 1. Searching and study selection process



Influencing Factors Associated with Physical Activity Participation

Individual Factors

- Midlife immigrant women lack time due to work, household, and other individual responsibilities
 - Motivation influences their participation
- Inadequate proficiency in life skills like language, driving, and physical activity knowledge poses barriers

Familial Factors

- Familial support was associated with engagement and participation in physical activity interventions
- Seasonality was also identified as a factor as they face unique familial circumstances during holiday seasons

Community and Social Influencing Factors

- Social support from community members through community networks, exercise buddies, and health coaches/promotoras can affect participation
- Most discussed factors were focused on the individual rather than the community level

DISCUSSION

The Ecosocial theory explores how social factors shape disease patterns, advocating for critical thinking in developing social interventions for health and wellness.

Intervention adjustments can facilitate physical activity participation, including adjustments in:

- Language
- Physical activity intensity
- Physical activity duration
- Logistical intervention adjustments (i.e., use of transportation vouchers, promoted participation and adherence among immigrant women)
- Technology-based adjustments (i.e., implementing smartphone-based interventions)

Limitations include:

- This review identifies various factors for designing physical activity interventions for midlife immigrant women, but no single optimal strategy is found.
- Included studies ranged in quality and research design, making the synthesis and interpretation of results difficult
- Methodological limitations, such as strict age criteria, potentially impacting the depth of insights into influencing factors.

NEXT STEPS

The findings of this study can contribute to evidence-based physical activity intervention planning

Guide community workers in implementing community-based strategies to increase participation, adherence and engagement in physical activity

Policy makers should evaluate, refine, and better incorporate midlife immigrant women's needs into current physical activity policies

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