A Systematic Review Exploring Mental Health First Aid Training Delivery and Assessment among University Students

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Background

- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training improves knowledge, attitudes and helping intentions across diverse populations.[1]

- MHFA is relevant for university students, due to prevalence of mental illness in their age group.[2]

Aims

- To explore evidence around implementing and assessing MHFA for university students globally.

Methods

- Systematic review guided by PRISMA checklist

- Database search: MEDLINE, Pre-MEDLINE, CINAHL, EMBASE, ERIC and PsycINFO

- Keywords:

University   **MHFA**
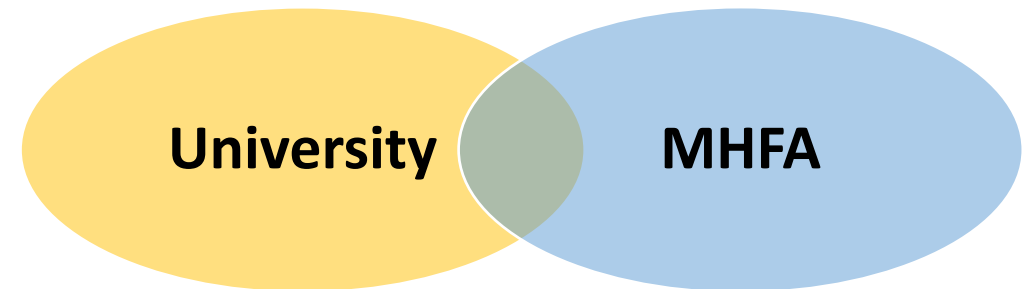
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2. Kessler RC, Berglund P, Demler O, Jin R, Merikangas KR, Walters EE. Lifetime Prevalence and Age-of-Onset Distributions of DSM-IV Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. Archives of General Psychiatry. 2005;62(6):593-602.

Results

12 studies in Australia, the US & the UK

Mostly **healthcare students** across all year levels receiving standard or tailored versions of MHFA

Constructs measured include mental health knowledge and literacy, confidence, skills application, stigma and attitudes, and helping intentions. Mostly self-reported.

Discussion

MHFA training is studied in 3 of 25 countries where it is available. Future studies across more diverse university student populations are needed.

No consensus to optimal time to integrate MHFA in university curricula, especially healthcare curricula, where mental health training is often insufficient.[3]

Future evaluations of MHFA training should include assessments of actual observed behaviours.

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