

The Effects of Sport Participation on Psychosocial Health of Youth: An Updated Systematic Review

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Abstract

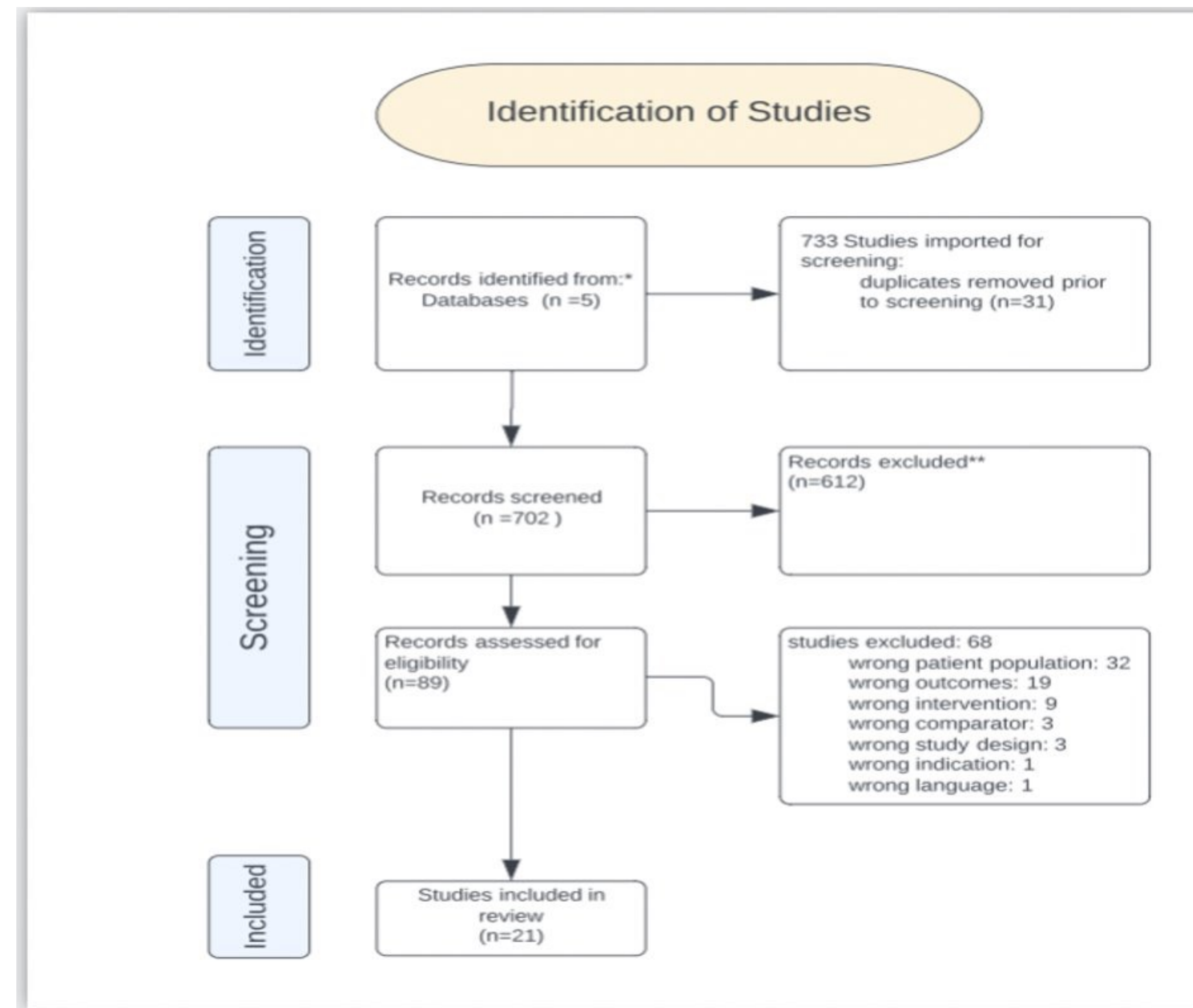
This updated systematic review investigated the benefits of sports participation, such as improved quality of life, self-esteem, well-being, and social participation, among adolescents. Sports participation was associated with positive mental health factors such as decreased anxiety, depression, and stress and improved body image and quality of life. It is recommended that adolescents should prioritize participation in sports to promote improved psychological and social health outcomes.

Introduction

This systematic review updates a systematic review published by Eime et al. (2013) that investigated the psychological and social benefits of participation in sport for children and adolescents. The proposed research question for this updated review was: Does participation in sports by children and adolescents have psychological and social benefits? The benefits in question include outcomes such as improved quality of life, well-being, mental health, resilience, social participation, self-esteem, and self-efficacy.

Methods

Covidence was used to screen studies retrieved from PubMed, Scopus, PsychINFO, CINAHL, and SPORTDiscus. The final review included 21 studies published between January 1, 2013, and February 22, 2022. Various critical appraisal tools were used to assess the quality of each study.



Results

The literature search produced 21 articles that qualified for methodological review. Results of the critical appraisal showed that the benefits of sport participation included improved quality of life, overall positive mental health, self-esteem, resilience, academic performance, and physical health. Many of the studies measured mental health outcomes and found that sports participation was associated with positive mental health improvements such as decreased anxiety, depression, and stress and improved body image.

Discussion

Findings from this review suggest that participation in sports had psychological and social benefits for adolescents and provided support for the development of sports programs for adolescents. The development of sports programs can fulfill psychological and social needs of children and adolescents and help them meet more demanding societal needs to increase their extracurricular engagement. Therefore, it is recommended that adolescents prioritize participation in sports to improve psychological and social health outcomes.

Reference

Eime, R. M., Young, J. A., Harvey, J. T., Charity, M. J., & Payne, W. R. (2013). A systematic review of the psychological and social benefits of participation in sport for children and adolescents: informing development of a conceptual model of health through sport. *The International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 10, 98.