



What are the features of targeted or system-wide initiatives that affect diversity in health professions trainees?

A BEME systematic review

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Background: Why bother?

- Disparities in access to healthcare persist despite efforts to improve care for underserved patients
- Students from under-represented populations are most likely to care for patients experiencing health inequities
- Institutions increasingly devoting resources to development & implementation of initiatives to increase diversity
- Impact of these interventions has not been systematically studied



Definitions

Under-represented population

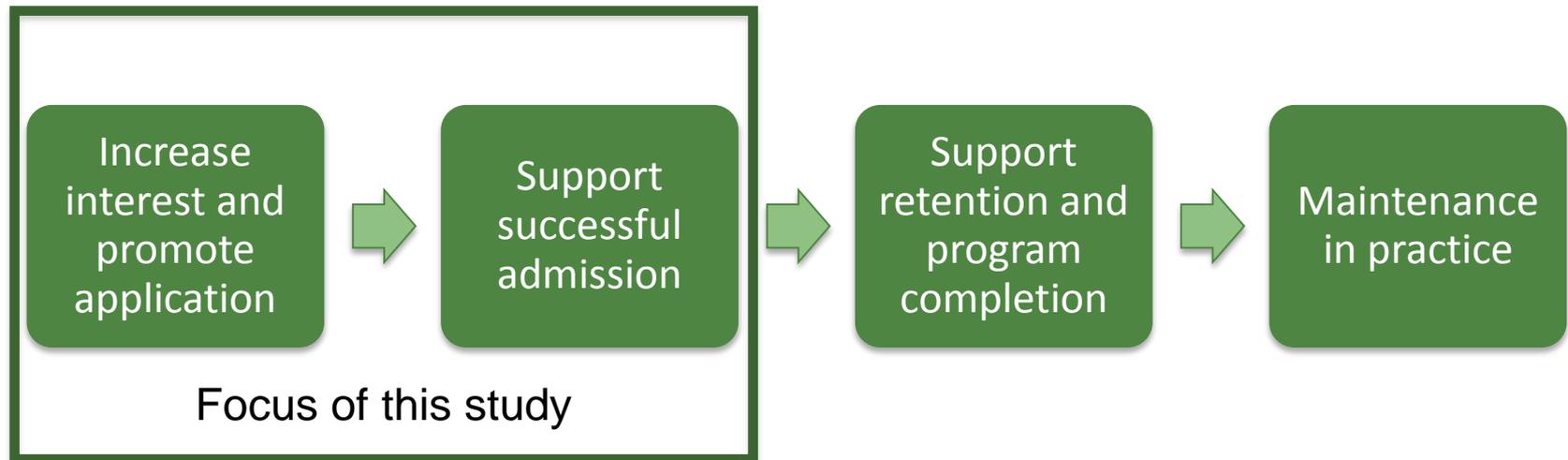
- A population experiencing health inequity that is under-represented in the health professions relative to the general population

Diversity

- Diversity within the academic & health care service refers to ensuring adequate representation of under-represented populations
- Dimensions considered: ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, geographic/rural, socioeconomic status

What impacts diversity?

Interventions at many stages can contribute to increasing diversity in the health professions:





Purpose

- To determine features & impact of initiatives designed to promote the recruitment & admission of under-represented students to health professions programs
- Results may guide the use of existing resources & inform development of more effective interventions

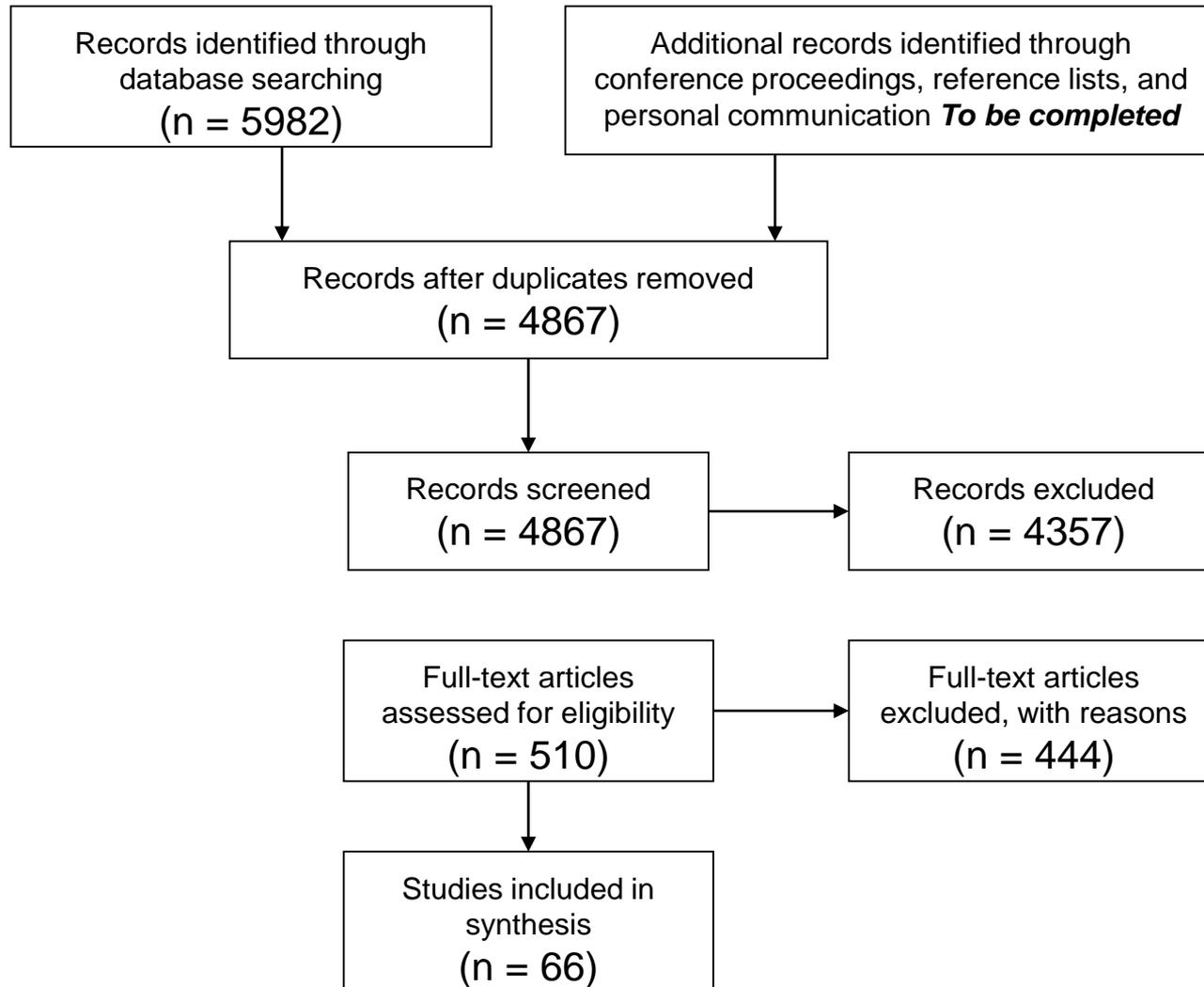


Summary of Key Inclusion Criteria

Population	Potential health professions trainees
Target Program	Health professions programs (Medicine, nursing, dentistry, pharmacy, dietetics, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dental hygiene, social work, clinical psychology, physician assistant, speech language pathology, etc.)
Intervention	Specific interventions aimed at increasing diversity through recruitment and admission to health professions programs (Pipeline programs, enrichment programs, facilitated admissions, post-baccalaureate programs, financial aid, awareness campaigns, etc.)
Outcome	Outcomes of the intervention are reported (Application rates, acceptance rates, admission population profiles, etc.)
Study Design	Studies which provide primary data for any of the above outcomes Quantitative or qualitative studies Excluded post test only design



Flowchart of Systematic Review Process





Summary of Intervention Types

Intervention Type	Number of Studies
Admissions	17
Enrichment programs	12
Mixed interventions	22
Outreach programs	9
Within program (current students)	2
Within program (prospective students)	4
Total	66



Early Results

Category	Suggestions & Key Themes
Outreach Programs (n=9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to health professions careers• Experiential programs• Targeted recruitment
Academic Enrichment Programs (n=12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study skills training• Academic advising• Test taking skills/preparation• Science course completion
Within Program initiatives for current students (n=2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spark the interest of potential URM applicants



Early Results

Category	Suggestions & Key Themes
Within Program initiatives for prospective students (n=4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprehensive programs• “Widening access” programs
Admissions (n=17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need holistic admissions process• Altered weighting of non-academic criteria
Mixed Initiatives (n=22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multiple initiatives targeting different points



Common Methodological Weaknesses

- Inadequate description of methods
 - 30 excluded
- Selection bias/unclear sample derivation
 - Before-after studies (30/34)
- Inadequate description of validity and/or reliability of outcome assessment
 - Before-after studies (34/34)
 - Cross-sectional studies (5/7)



Early Conclusions

- **Positive outcomes** reported for wide variety of interventions
- **Heterogeneity** of interventions & outcomes will likely prevent comparisons regarding magnitude of effects
- Admissions interventions report **narrow applicant pools** limit their effects
 - More research needed **earlier in the pipeline**
- Reporting on **mixed interventions** is practical approach, but challenging to determine impact of components



Next Steps

- Finalize grey literature search
- Contact included authors
- Complete data synthesis/analysis
- Consider focused analysis of higher quality studies
- Prepare manuscript