



Medically unexplained symptoms: patient and clinician experiences of Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue Systematic Review Protocol

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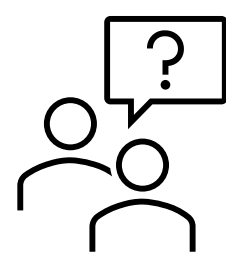
Supervised by Dr. Siobhán Corrigan (TCD) and Dr. Rebecca Maguire (NUIM)

Background

Medically unexplained symptoms (MUS) are persistent bodily complaints with **no obvious cause or identifiable pathology**.

MUS...

- are common, invisible and undetected by standard diagnostic tests
- vary in severity and impact
- can present as individual symptoms or recognizable syndromes
- remain a topic of debate



Fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue are two distinct yet overlapping conditions characterized by MUS.

Given their 'invisible' nature, MUS conditions may pose **unique challenges** (and opportunities) for patients and healthcare professionals alike...and patients may have **distinct needs** as a result of the unexplained nature of their condition.

Key Questions

What are the **needs and experiences** of individuals living with MUS syndromes, particularly fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue?

- ↳ Needs and experiences related to their condition, daily activities, healthcare...

How do healthcare professionals experience and respond to patients with MUS, fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue?

Methods

Search Strategy

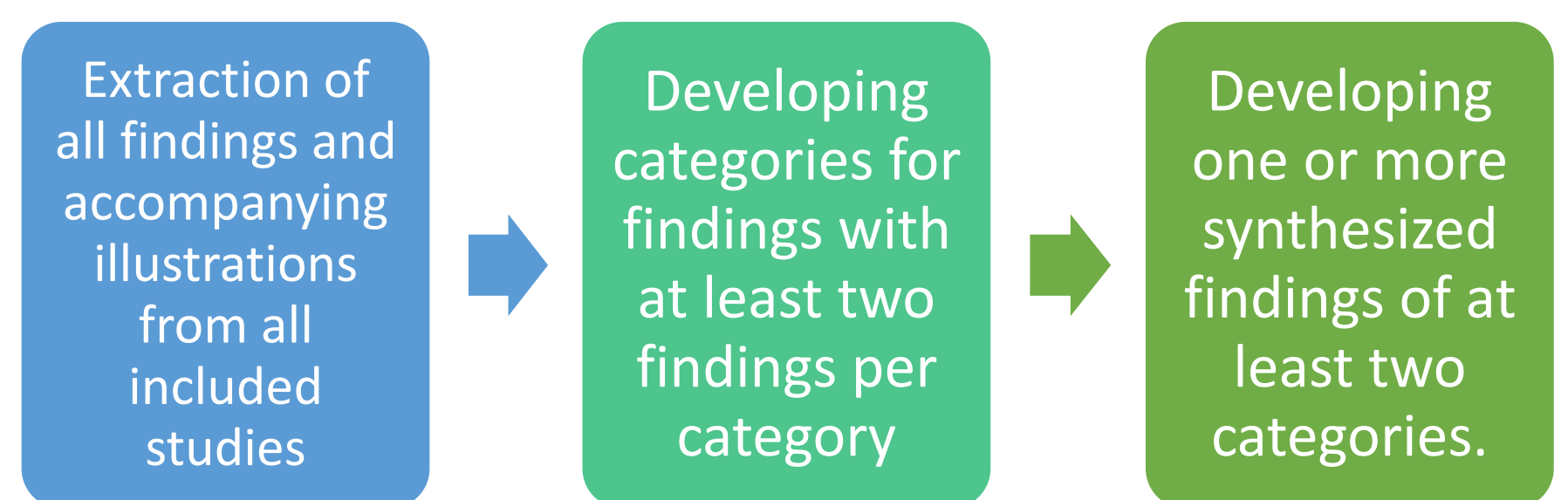
- Free text and thesaurus-generated terms relating to MUS, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia
- Databases: PsycINFO, PubMed, Science Direct, CINAHL, Scopus, ProQuest

Inclusion criteria

- Qualitative and mixed methods studies
- Express views of patients and clinicians
- Adults with chronic primary pain (fibromyalgia), medically unexplained chronic fatigue (CFS/ME)
- Healthcare professionals involved in the care of individuals with fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue, MUS

Qualitative synthesis

- Joanna Briggs Institute meta-aggregation approach
- ConQual criteria of dependability and credibility



Possible Implications

Identification and an understanding of the key challenges and enablers at various points in the patient journey.

Recommendations for improving patient outcomes by addressing the needs of patients and healthcare providers.

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