



Electronically Mediated Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Chronic Illnesses: A Systematic Research Synthesis

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Introduction

- ❖ Electronically mediated ACT approaches have been associated with high completion and high rates of adherence to protocol (Brown et al., 2016). ACT has previously been identified as an effective and cost-effective treatment (Kerns et al., 2011) for chronic pain in a variety of clinical settings and patient samples (McCracken et al., 2007).
- ❖ The purpose of this study is to systematically review existing research linking electronically mediated ACT interventions and chronic illnesses.

Methods

- ❖ A literature search was conducted using the keywords *acceptance and commitment therapy, online, internet, web, telephone, smartphone, arthritis, asthma, cancer, COPD, diabetes, chronic, and pain.*
- ❖ The inclusion criteria confirmed that each article covered an (a) intervention study (b) addressing an electronically mediated, ACT-based approach as treatment for (c) a sample of participants who are living with a chronic illness, (d) published between 2006 and 2020 in a (e) peer-reviewed (f) English-language journal.

Main Results

- ❖ The results revealed key patterns between studies, including types of chronic illness studied, gender demographics, attrition rates, location, and measurement tools.
- ❖ The average attrition rate was 2.3% for samples that were 95-100% female, as compared to a rate of 16.7% for more representative samples. The two studies involving only female participants reported attrition rates of 0% and 2%. Three studies recorded attrition rates in excess of 20%.
- ❖ This review found no evidence to support the idea that an unguided approach is associated with higher attrition rates.
- ❖ Six studies reported significant decreases in patient-reported pain, seven reported improvements in patient functioning measures, and eight studies reported significant psychological improvements.

Discussion

- ❖ The nine studies, individually and when compared, provide support for the use of ACT-based therapy for chronic conditions, electronically mediated ACT approaches, and collaborative care.
- ❖ Future studies may consider addressing attrition rates, with an emphasis on addressing challenges for male participants.
- ❖ Clinicians may consider using electronically mediated approaches in providing ACT treatment.

References

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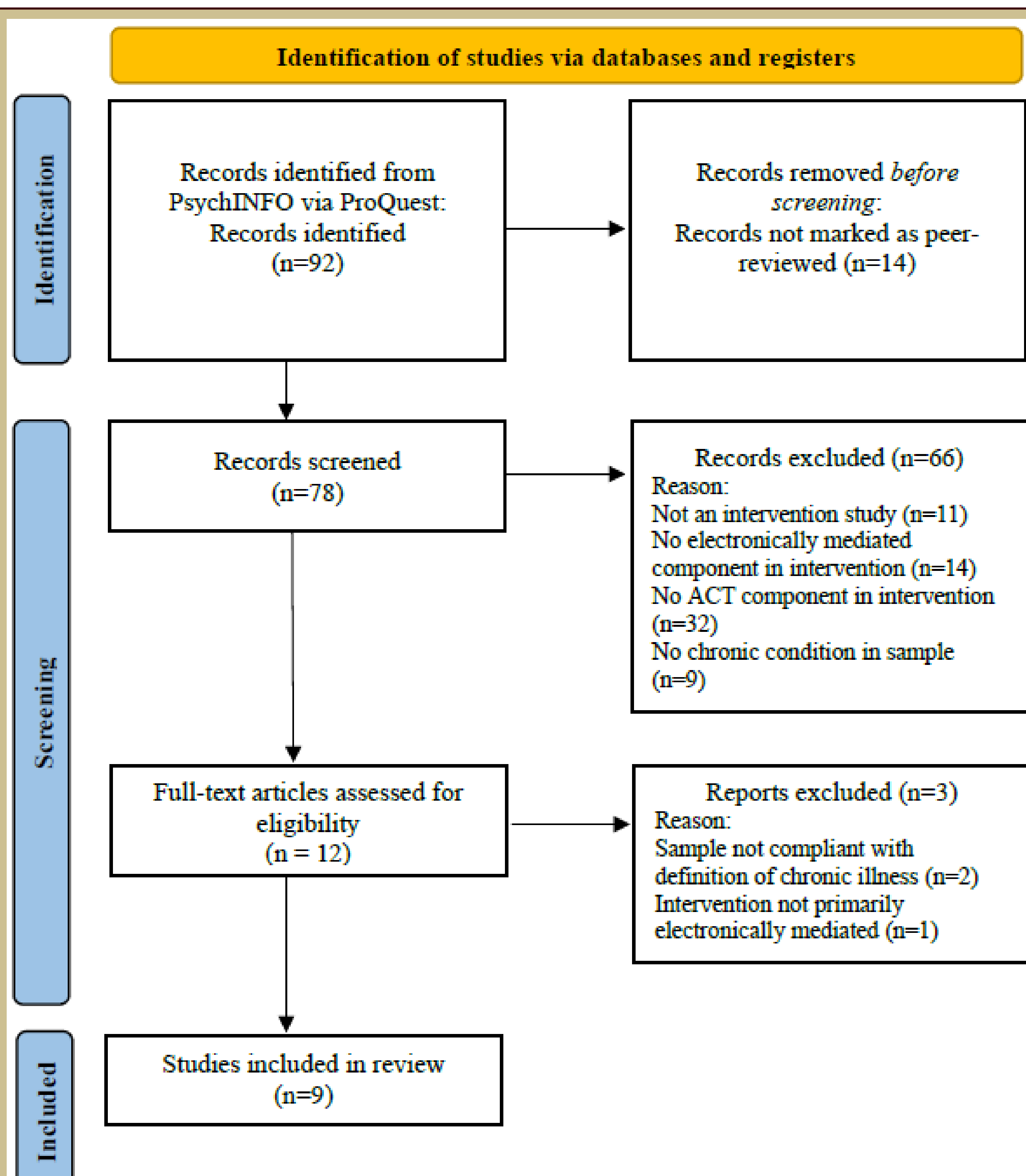


Figure 1. PRISMA flow chart