

THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY IN PSYCHEDELIC EFFECT ON DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS

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Psychological flexibility has been identified as a potential mechanism of change underlying the therapeutic benefit of psychedelics for individuals with depressive symptoms

INTRO

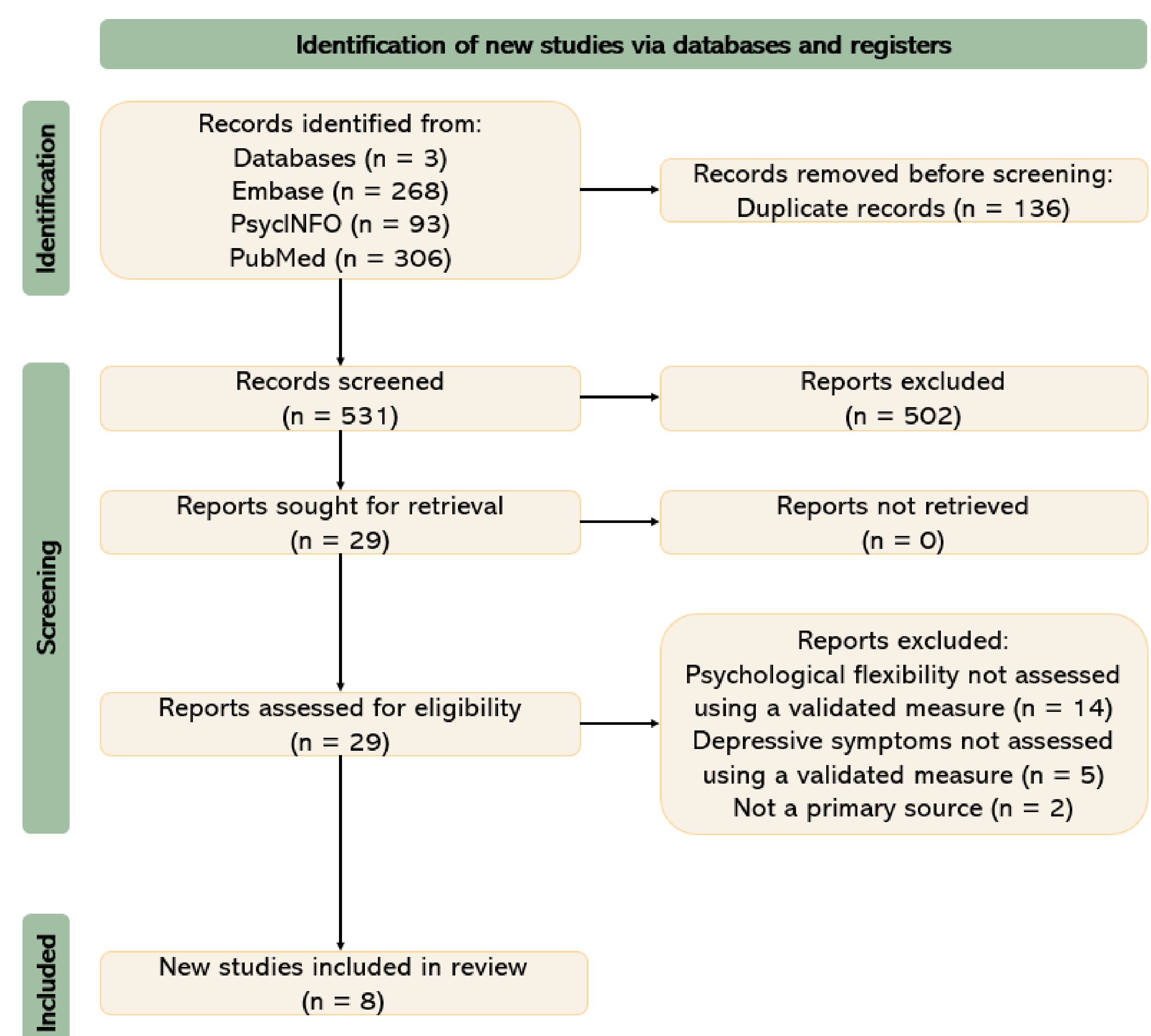
- Recent research suggests a potential synergism between acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) and psychedelic-assisted therapy ^{1,2}
- Meta-analyses of individuals with mood disorders suggest utility of psychedelics in reducing depressive symptoms ³

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

- Qualitative analyses identify psychological flexibility as a **mediator** of psychedelics' therapeutic effect on depressive symptoms
- Psychological flexibility may function as a **mechanism** underlying the improvements in depressive symptoms observed post-psychedelic use
- Current review is limited by inconsistencies in constructs (e.g., experiential avoidance decreases used as a proxy for psychological flexibility increases). Further research is needed to identify specific components of psychological flexibility associated with psychedelic use outcomes
- Findings support ACT as a viable candidate for integration with psychedelic-assisted therapy

METHODS

- A systematic literature review was conducted to investigate the relationship between psychedelic use and psychological flexibility
- Out of 667 records, eight studies met inclusion criteria



Authors, year	Study design	Study purpose	Primary outcome measures	Psychological flexibility identified as potential mediator or mechanism
Zeifman et al., 2020	Prospective cohort study	Explored the relationship between alterations in experiential avoidance and therapeutic outcomes resulting from psychedelic use	BEAQ QUIDS	Yes; mechanism
Davis et al., 2019	Cross-sectional survey study	Investigated psychological flexibility as a mediator of acute psychedelic experiences' impact on anxiety and depression	AAQ-II DASS-21	Yes; mediator
Close et al., 2020	Prospective web-based survey	Examined alterations in psychological flexibility following psychedelic experiences	AAQ-II QUIDS	Yes; mechanism
Mans et al., 2021	Naturalistic observation study	Reanalyzed data relevant to the impact of psychedelic use on various facets of well-being	AAQ-II QUIDS-SR	No explicit discussion
Zeifman et al., 2023	Secondary analysis of RCT data	Examined pre-existing data to assess decreases in experiential avoidance as a mechanism underlying the therapeutic effects of psilocybin-assisted therapy	BEAQ MADRS QUIDS-SR-16	Yes; mechanism
Davis et al., 2020	Retrospective self-report survey study	Investigated the impact of a multimodal clinical psychedelic program on mental health outcomes	AAQ-II PHQ-9	Yes; mediator
Davis et al., 2023	Clinical chart review study	Further evaluated the effectiveness of protocol outlined in Davis et al., (2020)	AAQ-II PHQ-2	Yes; mediator
Xin et al., 2023	Secondary analysis of a prospective chart review study	Built upon Davis et al., (2023). Assessed psychological flexibility as a mediator in intervention effect on mental health outcomes	AAQ-II PHQ-2	Yes; mediator

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