

Third Wave Therapies for Perinatal Loss: A scoping review

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1.0 Introduction

Perinatal Loss

Perinatal loss refers to the death of a baby during pregnancy, childbirth or within the first seven days of life (Gregory et al., 2025). Following the death of a baby, some bereaved parents will experience a pathological and prolonged grief response (Dodd et al., 2017). Perinatal bereavement is associated with increased depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress (Herbert et al., 2022; Kersting et al., 2007).

Third-Wave Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Third-wave CBT is a group of interventions which emphasizes the role of context in the individual's relationship to cognition and affect, rather than their content (Hayes & Hoffman, 2017). In the bereavement context, third-wave CBT has the potential to be an effective intervention due to its objectives of making grief more flexible, by promoting acceptance and reducing avoidance (Garzia-Lozano, 2024). **Given the psychological impact of perinatal loss, there is a clear need for effective interventions targeting perinatal grief, which third-wave CBT may be well-suited to support.**

AIM: This systematic review aimed to explore the current research investigating the use of third-wave cognitive behavioural interventions to support those who have experienced perinatal loss.

3.0 Results

3.1 Study Overview

A total of 6 studies were included in the review: Nasrollahi et al. (2022), Patel et al. (2018), Roberts and Montgomery (2015; 2016a; 2016b), and Wang et al. (2021).

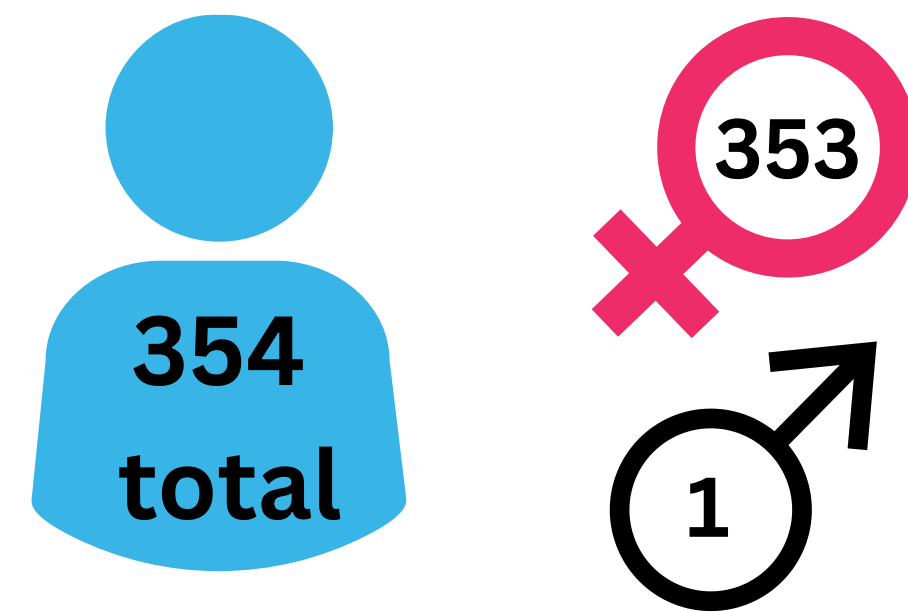


Location: China (1), Iran (1), and India (4)



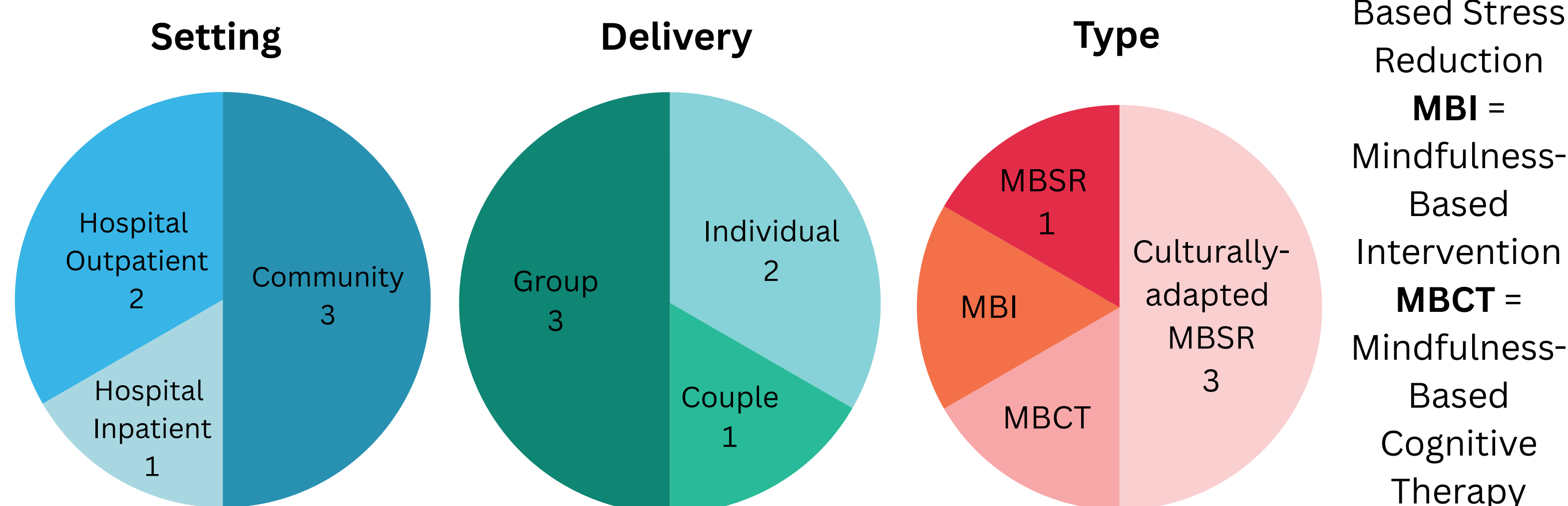
Study design: randomised control trial (1), non-randomised control trial (1), pre-post quasi-experimental (3), and case study (1)

3.2 Population



Type of perinatal loss included in study:
Stillbirth (3), miscarriage (1), recurrent miscarriage (2)

3.3 Intervention



2.0 Method

This systematic review has been registered on prospero on January, 2025: [CRD42025622069](#)

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Inclusion Criteria

- History of perinatal loss
- Implemented a third-wave CBT intervention

2

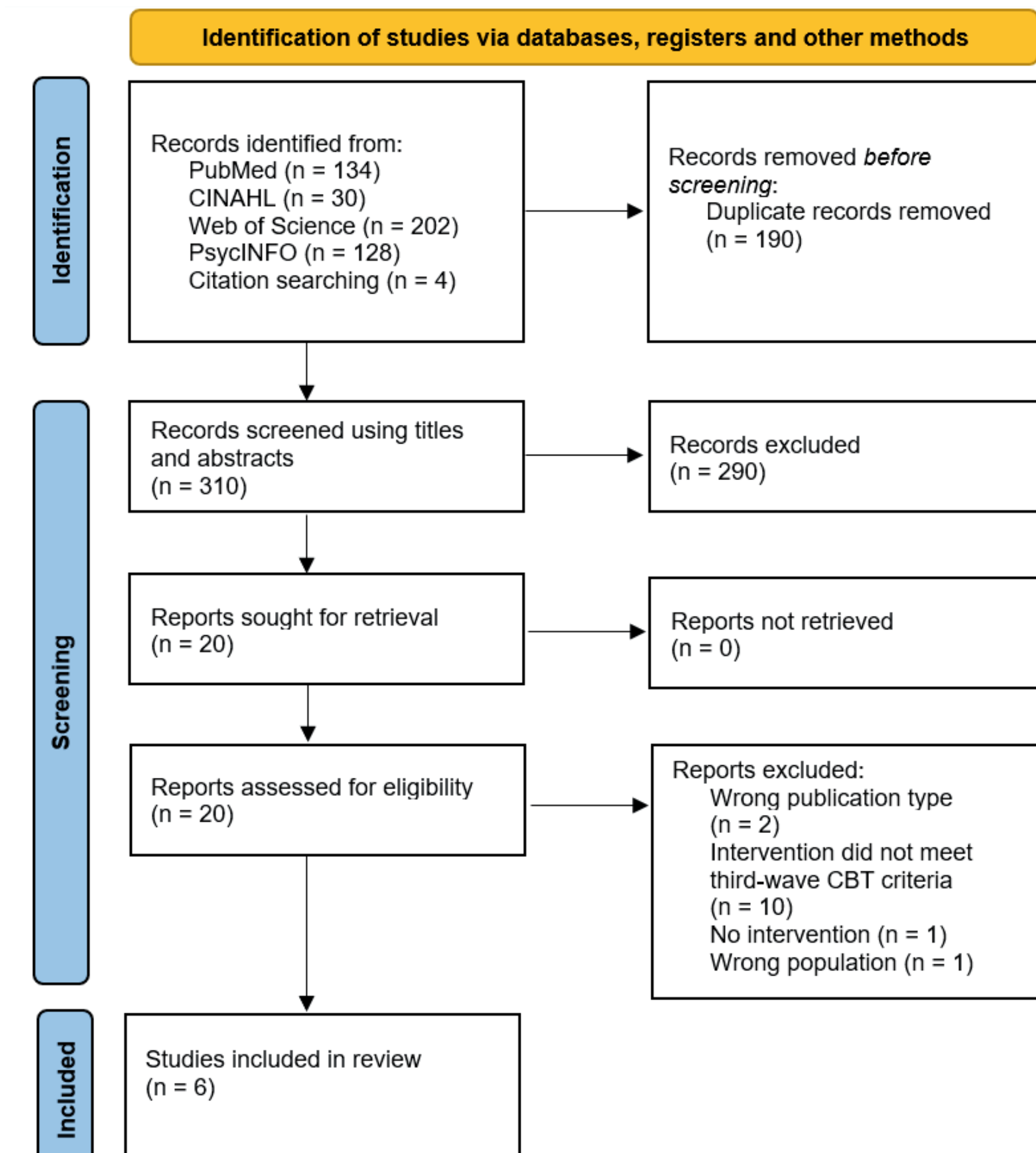
Electronic Database Search

- PubMed
 - PsycINFO
 - Web of Science
 - CINAHL
- Search terms:
Perinatal death + Third-Wave CBT intervention

3

Screening

Screening of all papers at all stages, was completed independently by 2 reviewers



4

Quality Appraisal

Joanna Briggs Institute Critical Appraisal Tools (Barker et al., 2023; 2024)

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Data Extraction

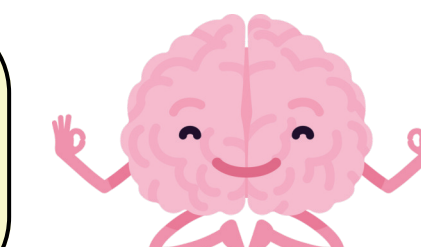
Completed by 2 reviewers using a data extraction form in Excel.

3.4 Outcomes

Outcomes were grouped into 4 domains:



Perinatal Grief: over 12 months



Psychological Wellbeing:



Psycho-social Functioning: in 2/4 outcomes



Mindfulness: Mixed findings - 2 facets

4.0 Discussion

4.1 Strengths

- Use of double blind screening.
- Cross-cultural inclusion of studies.
- Interdisciplinary relevance.

4.2 Limitations

- Heterogeneity in research design - no meta-analysis
- Quality appraisal was conducted by one person

4.3 Clinical Implications and Future Research

- Effectiveness of MBIs delivered in various formats.
- Potential benefits of training maternity staff in mindfulness to support parents following perinatal loss.
- Need for culturally sensitive adaptations of MBIs for diverse populations.
- Further research to explore additional third-wave interventions for perinatal loss.

4.4 Conclusion

Findings from 6 studies indicate that Mindfulness-Based Interventions are associated with significant reductions in some grief-related psychological difficulties following perinatal loss. The lack of studies investigating other Third-wave CBT interventions for perinatal loss indicates a need for further research.

- Perinatal grief** ↓ at 6-week and 12-month follow-up may indicate that MBIs are effective at reducing prolonged grief, but lack of control groups means this is inconclusive.
- Depression and stress** ↓ across studies - aligns with literature promoting MBIs for perinatal mental health (Dhillon et al., 2017).
- Psychosocial coping** outcomes were mixed with improvements in affect and religious coping, but no change in satisfaction with life and social support. This may reflect cultural factors in grief-related support as well as the intrapersonal focus of mindfulness.
- 2 mindfulness facets** ↑ consistently (Describing and Acting with Awareness). However, only 4 studies measured mindfulness skills, limiting inference about whether mindfulness skills mediated the observed improvements in other outcomes.

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