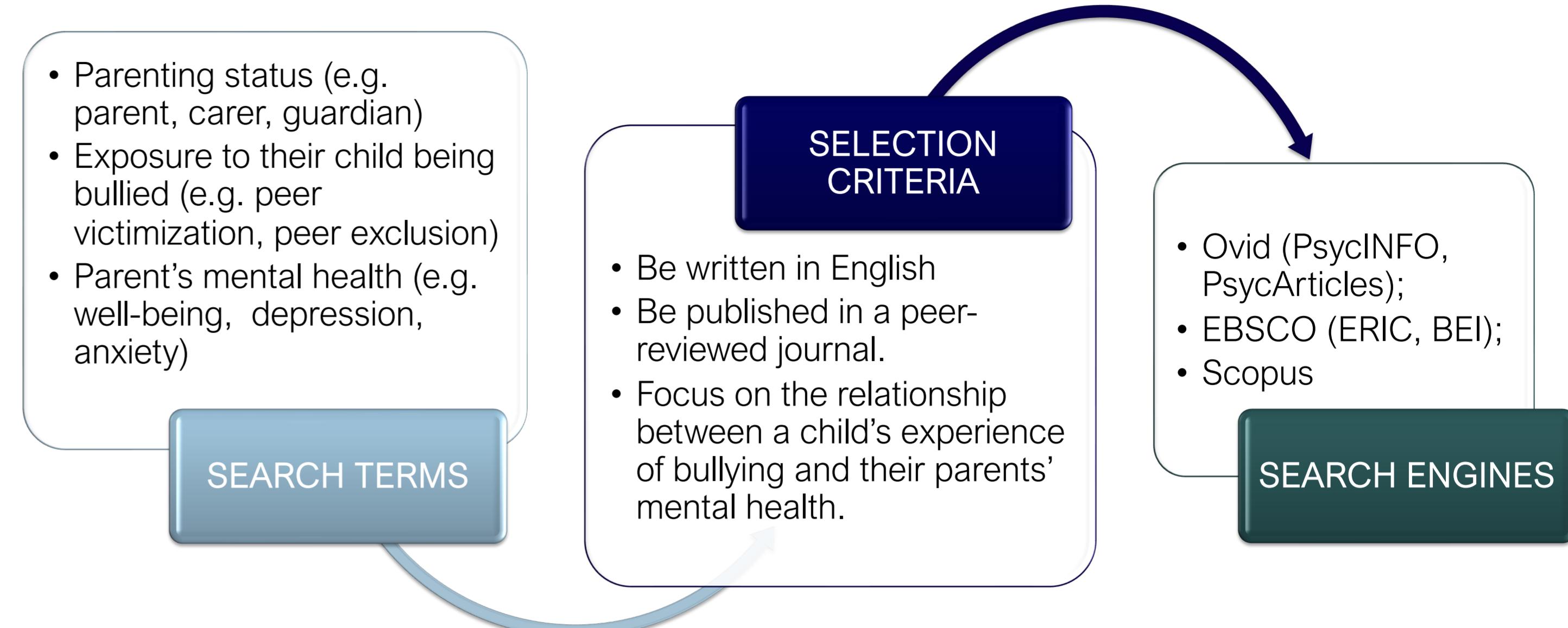


BACKGROUND

- When children experience bullying, parental support can act as a protective factor against the negative effects of bullying (Lereya, et al., 2013).
- When addressing parental mental health, research (e.g., Harcourt et al., 2014) typically focuses on how parents act as a source of support for their children and their feelings about this regarding limited support services.
- Although limited, previous research has highlighted how being a parent of a bullied child is associated with poorer wellbeing in parents (Brown, 2010; Noret, 2023) and parents often report feeling angry and sad (Harcourt et al., 2014).
- Further, when trying to help their children cope with bullying the support offered from schools was not fitting or helpful for parents (Harcourt et al., 2014).
- While evidence suggests that a child being bullied can be associated with poorer wellbeing in parents, research in this area is varied and limited.
- Therefore, the aim of this scoping review is to synthesise extant evidence available to address the following research questions:
 - What is the impact of a child being bullied on their parents?
 - What factors play a role in the relationship between children's bullying experiences and their parents' mental health and wellbeing?

METHOD

- This study was registered on the Open Science Framework and followed the PRISMA reporting guidelines.

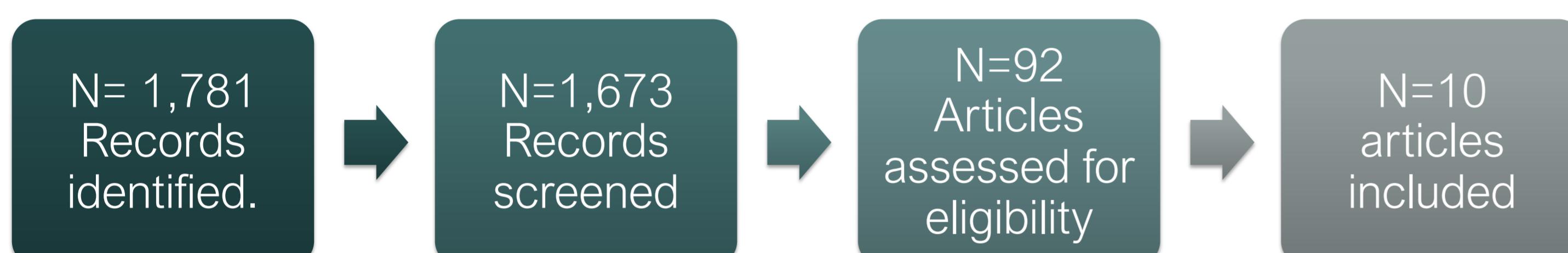


KEY FINDINGS

STUDY CHARACTERISTICS

- Overall, ten articles are included in this review, see Figure 2.

Figure 2: Simplified PRISMA Diagram



- The included studies, involved between 4 and 217 participants.
 - The majority of participants were mothers (75-100%)
- The studies were conducted across five countries (Canada, USA, NZ, Aus, Israel)
- Semi-structured interviews were used in seven studies (Ashburner et al., 2019; Brown et al., 2013; Humphrey & Crisp, 2008; Mishna et al., 2006, 2008, 2020; Sawyer et al., 2011) and three studies were online, open-ended questionnaires (Benatov, 2019; Harcourt et al., 2015; Lynch et al., 2015).

RESULTS

- The key findings presented here, highlight the preliminary findings of the synthesis of the studies.
- Bullying was found to impact parents mainly in accordance with the following themes: 1) Negative outcomes; 2) Seeking justice; 3) Impact on the wider family; 4) Accessing support and 5) Normalising bullying.
- The quotations presented here are taken directly from the quotations presented in the included studies.

NEGATIVE OUTCOMES

- In nine of the studies, parents had both emotional and physical outcomes as a product of their child being bullied.
- The relentlessness of the bullying led to feelings such as sadness, guilt and hopelessness and stress-related symptoms.

"I was sad, angry, hurt and felt I had failed my son. Literally I was broken hearted and felt guilty. Why? I don't really know, but I felt it was my fault" (Humphrey & Crisp, 2008).

"By the time it was over, we felt like we were victimized as well. We felt helpless." (Brown et al., 2013).

"I can't be a good parent sending him back [to school]... it's not a safe environment." (Ashburner et al., 2019)

SEEKING JUSTICE

- In two of the studies, parents highlighted their need for justice after their child was bullied.
- Some parents took matters into their own hands to get a form of justice through confrontation, whereas other parents expressed a desire for justice.

"Her father just wanted to beat the living daylights out of the students involved to teach them a lesson" (Lynch et al., 2015).

"Nothing helped until I went into the class and screamed at the kids that if anyone comes near my kid I don't know what I'll do to them." (Benatov, 2019).

IMPACT ON THE WIDER FAMILY

- Three studies highlighted how bullying affected the wider family, outside of the child and the parent(s) who were supporting their child.
- Tension in the home and within personal relationships was apparent in how to handle the bullying and also due to disruption of everyday family activities.

"There was 'some difference between mum and dad views on how to limit the risk and cell phone access' and this was a source of stress and tension." (Lynch et al., 2015).

"Siblings, on becoming exposed to the bullied child's changed behaviour, began to fear and not want to engage with that child." (Humphrey & Crisp, 2008).

ACCESSING SUPPORT

- Various forms of support parents accessed were highlighted throughout the research, from wider systematic support (e.g. politicians, GPs, police) to closer forms of support (e.g., support groups and schools).
- In seven studies, accessing support from schools was often the first form of support accessed but was the most likely to refuse help.

"I felt insignificant, just like they didn't want to be bothered and I just felt like, that's all I was; I was bothering them." (Brown et al., 2013).

"everyone should take responsibility. It is everyone's problem." (Harcourt et al., 2015).

"the school said their hands were tied as the cyberbullying occurred outside of the school grounds... [they] advised us to go to the police.." (Lynch et al., 2015).

NORMALISING BULLYING

- Surprisingly, in four studies, some parents minimised their child's experiences of bullying, as a part of life or not severe enough to be classed as bullying.
- Despite noting the negative impact bullying can have on children, these parents seemed to be less impacted by bullying.

"I don't think the issues have been really serious, it's just the way our daughter handles it.." (Mishna et al., 2020).

"I mean obviously if it was a physical altercation or severe risk to my daughter, of course I would (say something). But it is so subtle and it is just normal girl stuff." (Sawyer et al., 2011).

DISCUSSION

- The impact of a child being bullied on their parent is significant, but not straightforward.
- Not all parents seem to be affected by their child being bullied, but the parents who are affected report frequent negative emotional and physical outcomes personally and their wider family also being affected by one child's experiences with bullying.
- Seeking support and justice are prevalent themes but often are not meaningful endeavours when trying to improve their well-being and seemingly having an undesired outcome of worsening mental health outcomes.
- Factors that play a role in this relationship between children's bullying experiences and parents' mental health and well-being seem to indicate that appropriate support from schools and wider factors and feeling that their efforts in trying to find solutions would reduce stress and related negative outcomes.
- However, as parents often feel let down by school-related support and feel victimised themselves, further research should explore if more positive outcomes and collaborative efforts improve parents' well-being.

References

Please scan this QR code to access the references for this poster and to find out more about the review.



Sarah Wild

Department of Education, University of York

Email: sarah.wild@york.ac.uk