Navigating the Labyrinth: Supporting Adults with Complex Health & Psychosocial Needs

Preliminary results from a scoping review

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Objectives

- Context – community/Primary Care
- Preliminary results from a scoping review
- What are the implications for healthcare systems
- What are the implications for social workers
- Future work

What are complex health and social care needs?

Chronic health condition and could benefit from support to improve outcomes

- Long-term chronic self-neglect, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, etc
- Dementia
- Brain injury
- Mental health
- Fractured family relationships
- Safeguarding
- Poor housing conditions
- High risk of falls
- High nursing needs that cannot be met at home
- Personality disorder

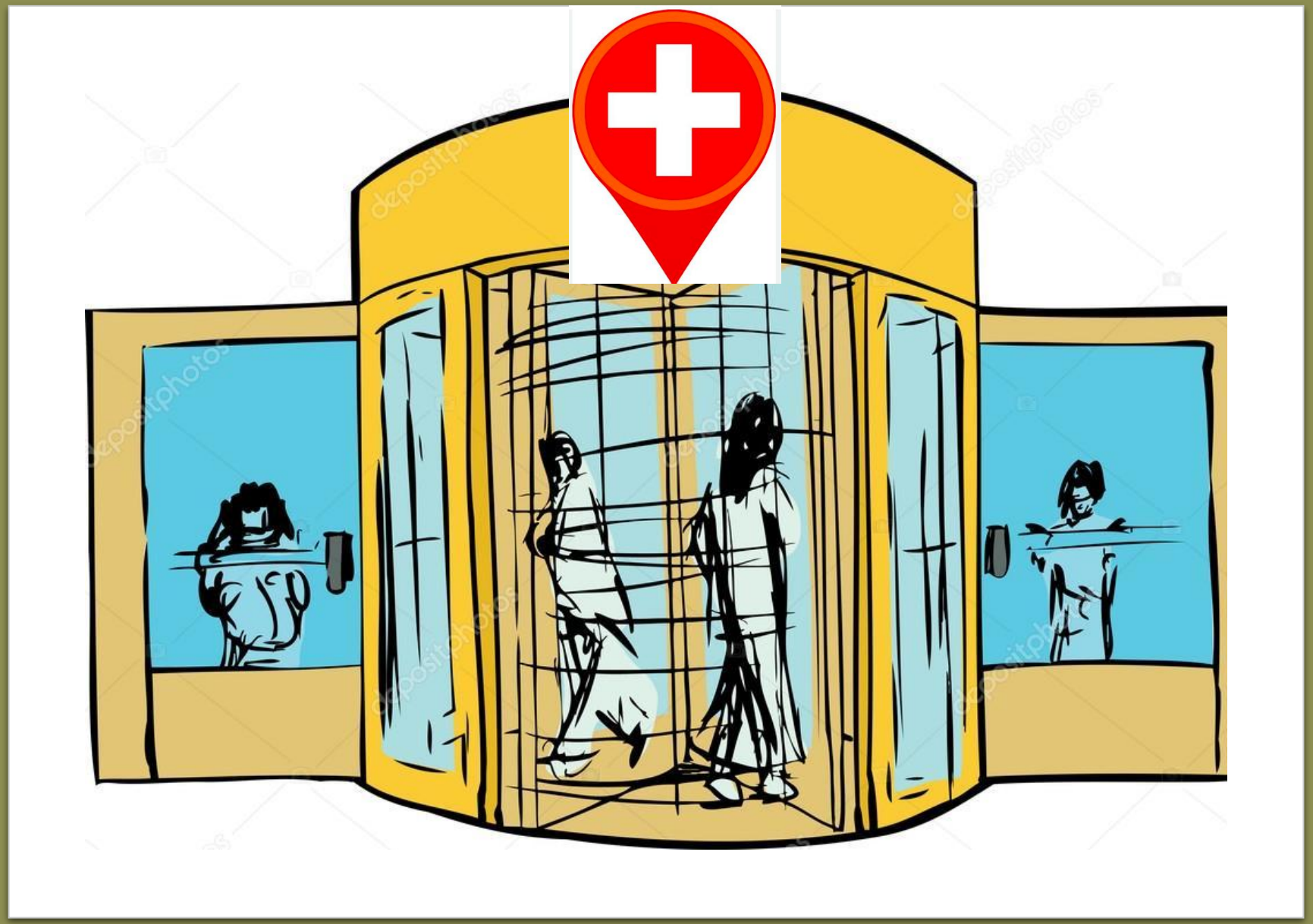
Home is where the danger is……..

Extreme Hording

Verbal abuse

Impact on community health and social care staff

- Feeling alone worried and isolated
- Un supported
- Do I have the skills, expertise and experience
- Unsure of the rules of engagement
- Blame…..‘It’s your fault’ if something goes wrong
- Can I pass this on to someone else



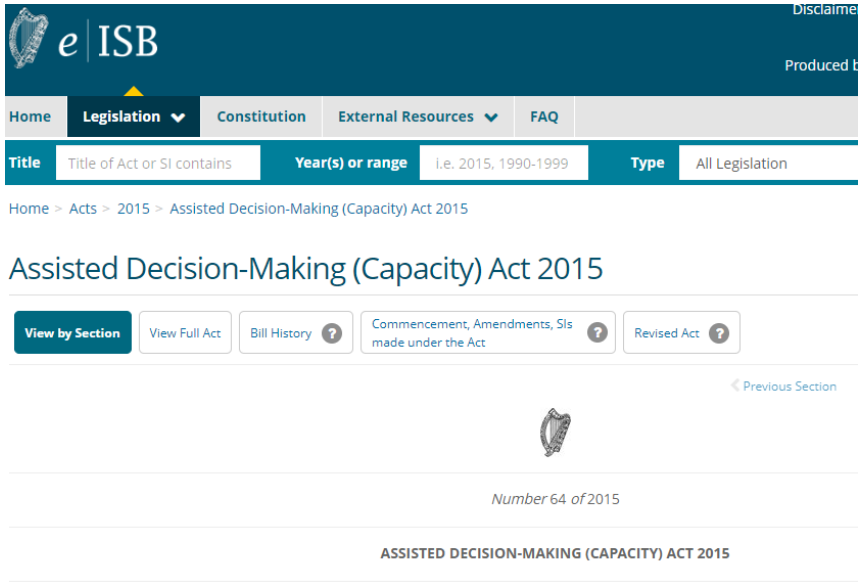
Frequent admissions or Extended length of stay in hospitals

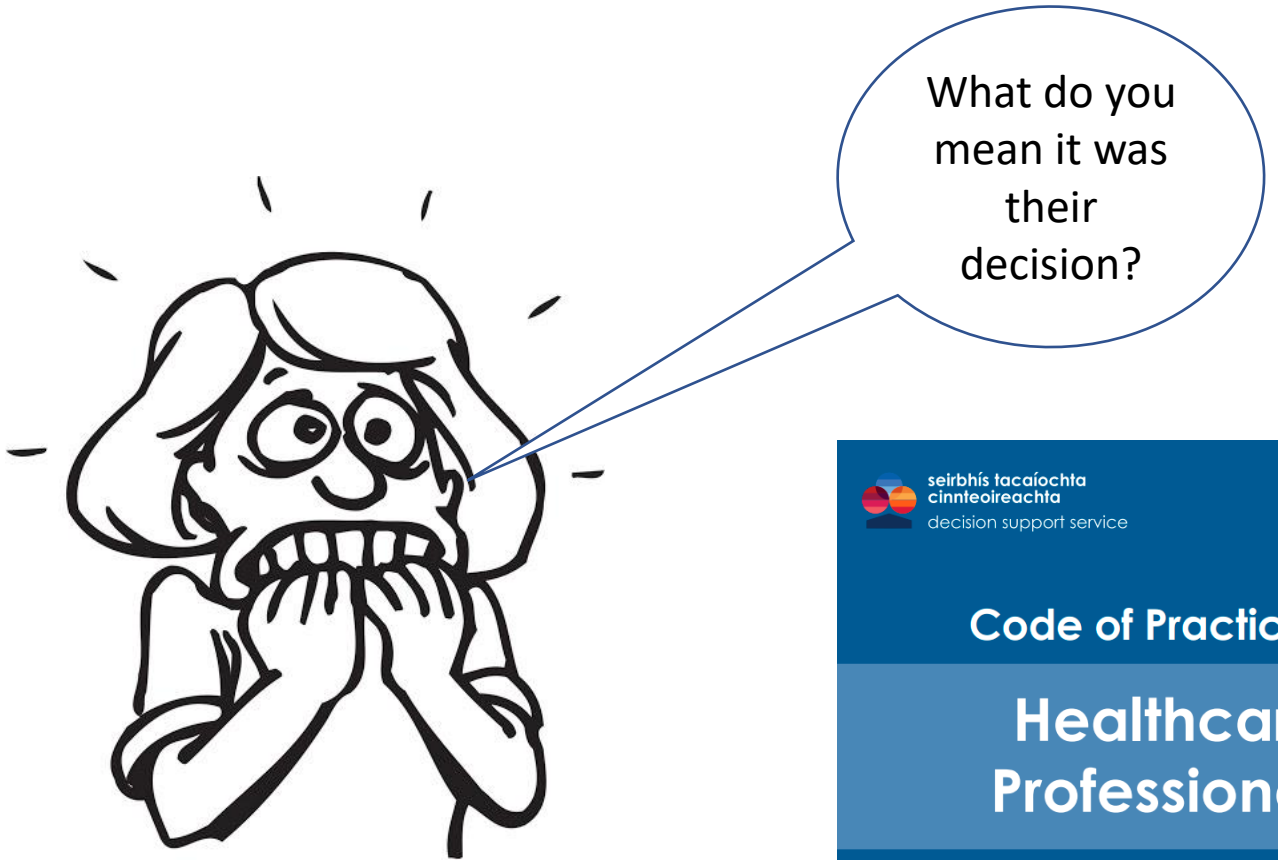
For community staff hospital admission seen as a safe place?

Ahh..! “he/she has been admitted again”

- Length of stay
- Impact on other patients
- Possibility of court proceedings
- Blaming community colleagues because care needs are not being met at home
- Decisions made to discharge without engaging with community colleagues

What!.. “They’re discharging him/her home”!



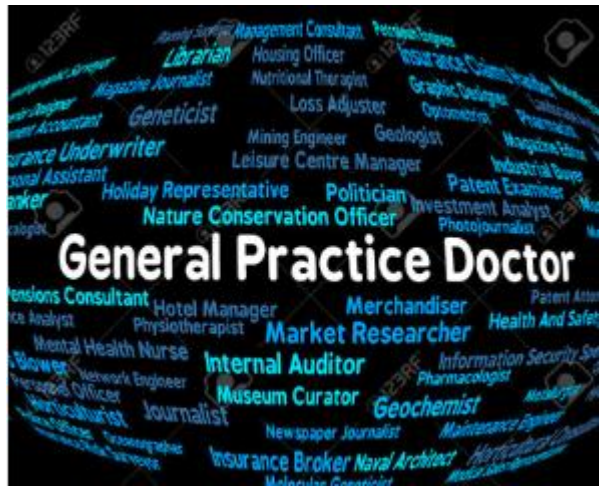


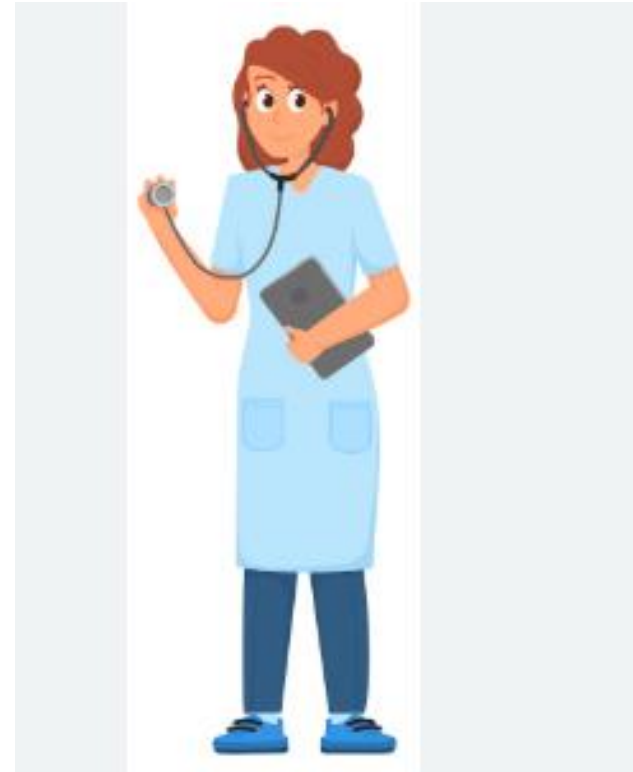
seirbhís tacaíochta cinnteoireachta
decision support service

Code of Practice for

Healthcare Professionals

Community Healthcare Worker


General Practice Doctor
Management Consultant
Librarian
Housing Officer
Nutritional Therapist
Geneticist
Loss Adjuster
Mining Engineer
Geologist
Leisure Centre Manager
Holiday Representative
Politician
Patent Examiner
Nature Conservation Officer
Investment Analyst
Photojournalist
Merchandiser
Hotel Manager
Physiotherapist
Market Researcher
Mental Health Nurse
Internal Auditor
Pharmacologist
Museum Curator
Geochemist
Journalist
Newspaper Journalist
Insurance Broker
Naval Architect



Do policies already exist? - UK

- *"Adults with complex needs are defined as people aged 18 or over who need a high level of support with many aspects of their daily life, and relying on a range of health and social care services. This may be because of illness, disability, broader life circumstances or a combination of these. Complex needs may be present from birth or develop over the course of a person's life, and may fluctuate."*
- **Social work with adults experiencing complex needs; NICE guideline**, 26 May 2022, page 7 https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng216
- Feb 2024; UK **National Institute for Health and Care Research** commissioned a study on social work practice in supporting adults with complex needs

Policy Procedure Protocol Guidance (PPPG)

- Does not currently exist
- Requires an evidence base
- Scoping review

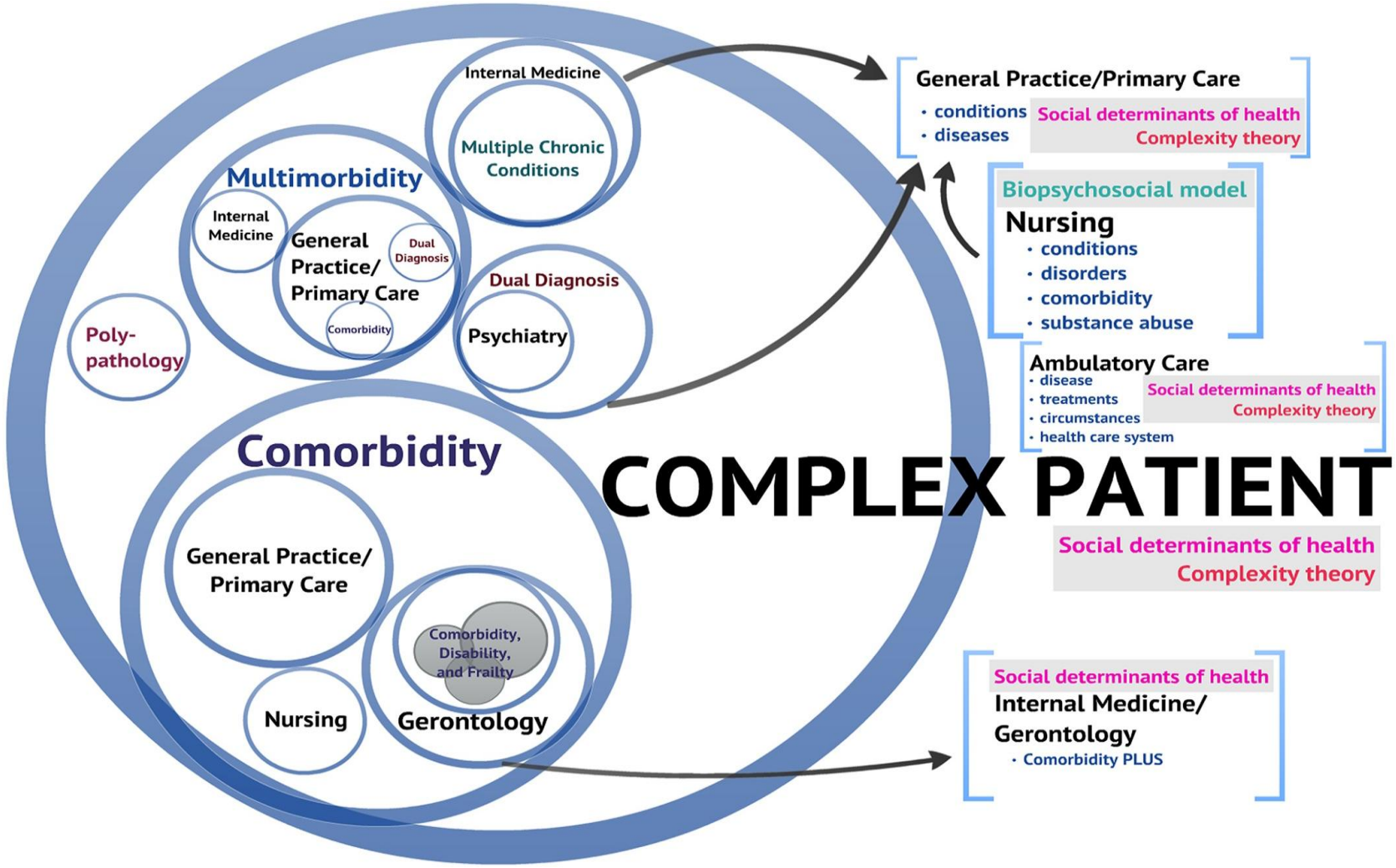
“Interventions to support community-dwelling older people with complex health and complex social care needs presenting to primary care: A scoping review”

Authors:

Aurelia Ciblis[1] Sarah Donnelly[2] Maria O’Sullivan[3] Deirdre O'Donnell[2] Austin Warters[1]
1 HSE; 2 UCD; 3 TCD.

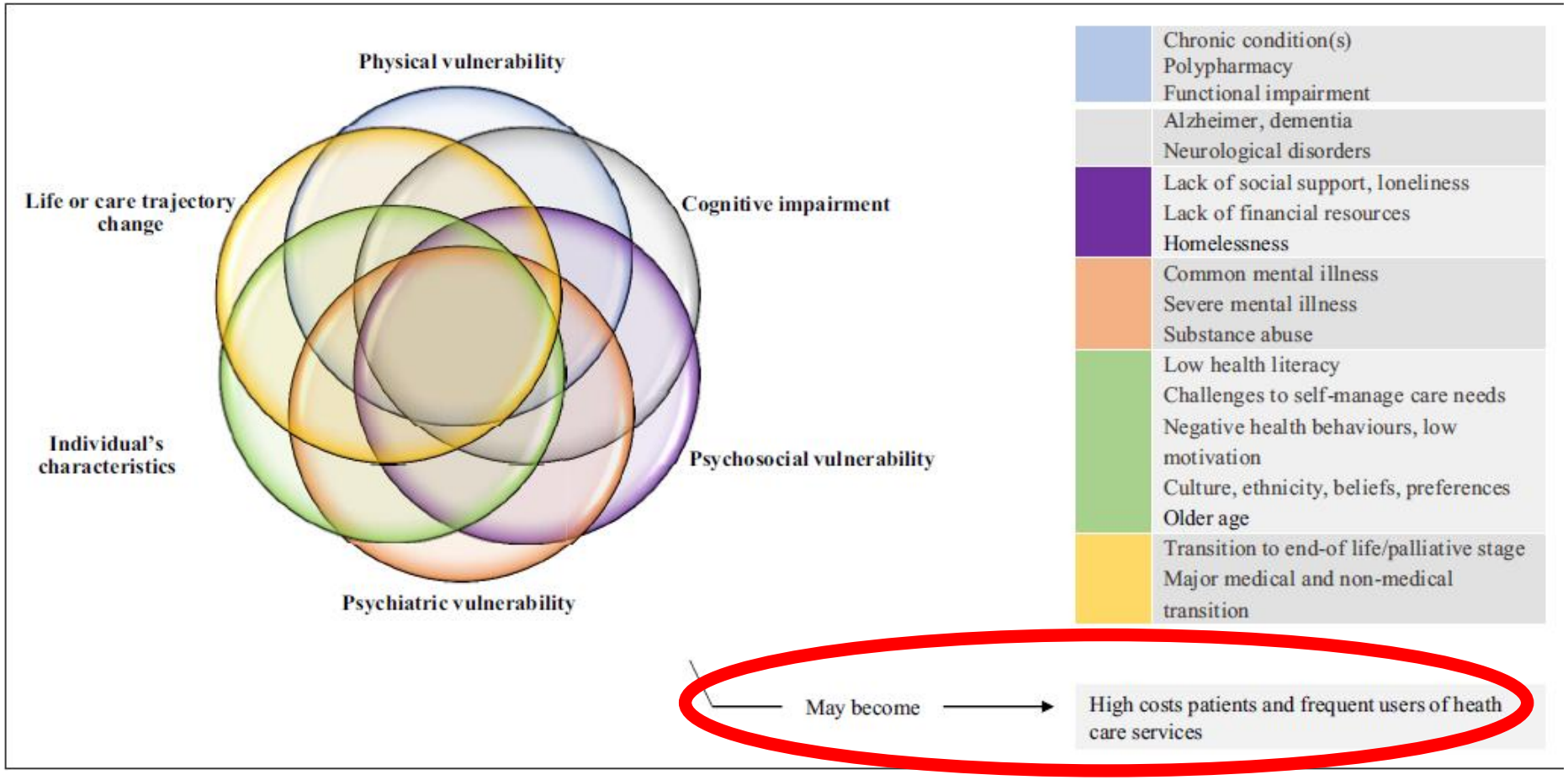
Emerging definitions in research

The complex patient: A concept clarification
Manning and Gagon - 2017



Nursing & Health Sciences, Volume: 19, Issue: 1, Pages: 13-21, First published: 05 January 2017, DOI: (10.1111/nhs.12320)

Definition in research



Definition of patient complexity in adults: A narrative review

Nicolaus et al, Journal of Multimorbidity and Comorbidity, Volume 12: 1–13, 2022

Research question

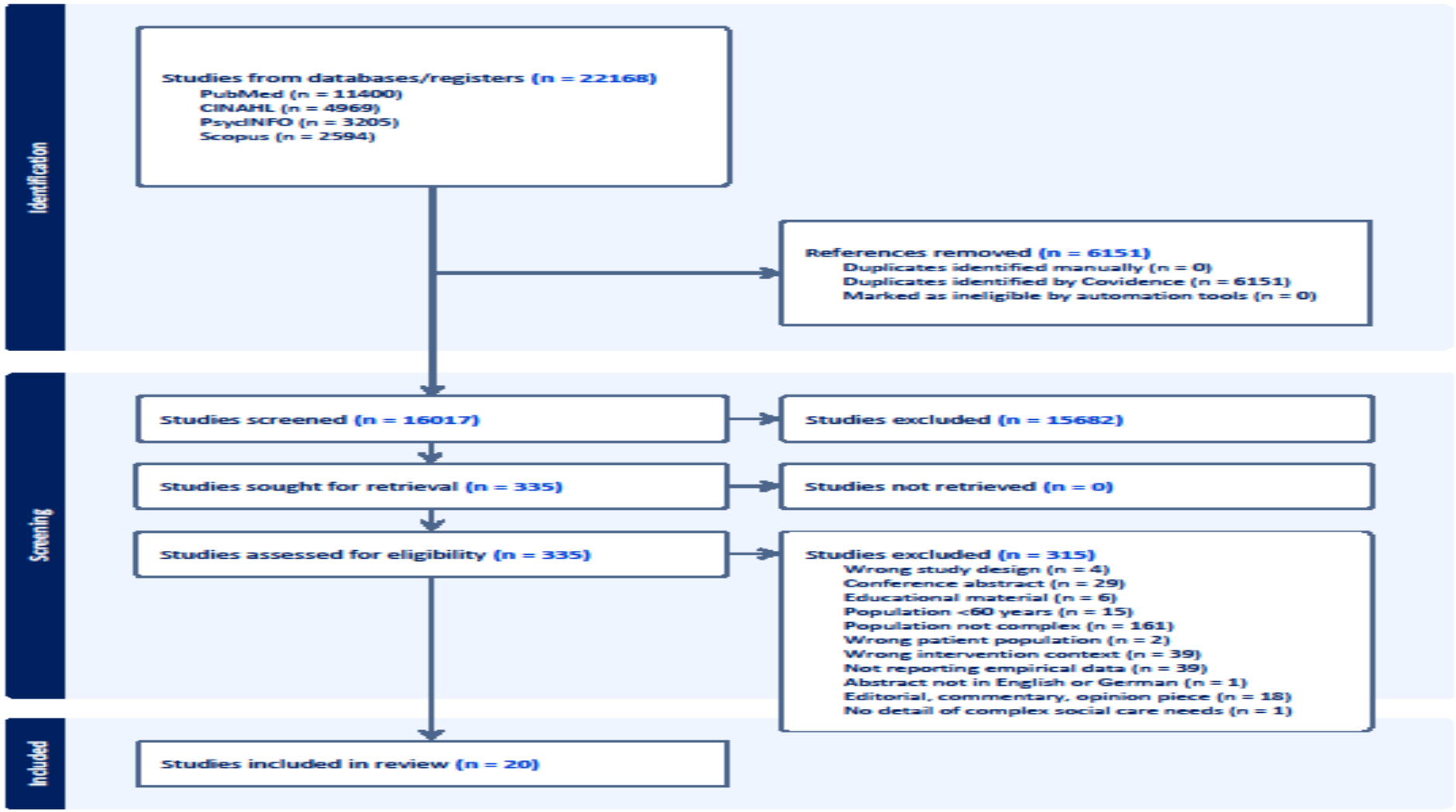
- 1) What are the **characteristics** of complex health and social care needs among older community-dwelling people?

- 2) What is known about **interventions** to support older people with complex health and complex social care needs?

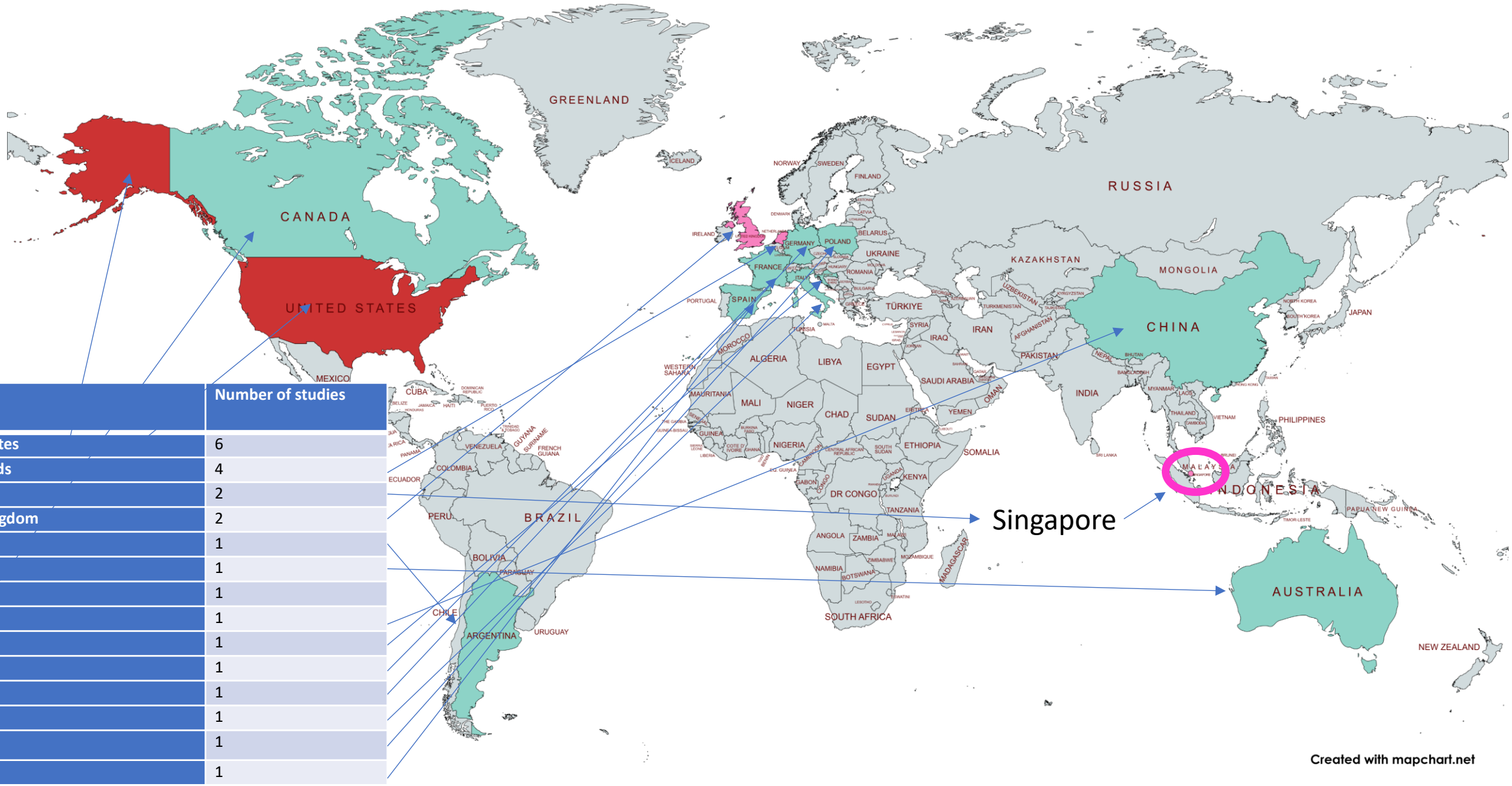
- 3) What **outcomes** were reported from these interventions, for older people, for staff and for the health and social care system?

Population, Concept, Context (PCC) framework

- Community dwelling adults aged 60 and over
- Primary care-based interventions aimed at supporting older people with complex health and complex social care needs
- Older people who require interventions from primary care. Primary care will include general practitioners (GPs), community nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social work, etc. Integrated care systems will also be included.


Identification
Studies from databases/registers (n = 22168)
PubMed (n = 11400)
CINAHL (n = 4969)
PsycINFO (n = 3205)
Scopus (n = 2594)
References removed (n = 6151)
Duplicates identified manually (n = 0)
Duplicates identified by Covidence (n = 6151)
Marked as ineligible by automation tools (n = 0)
Screening
Studies screened (n = 16017)
Studies excluded (n = 15682)
Studies sought for retrieval (n = 335)
Studies not retrieved (n = 0)
Studies assessed for eligibility (n = 335)
Studies excluded (n = 315)
Wrong study design (n = 4)
Conference abstract (n = 29)
Educational material (n = 6)
Population <60 years (n = 15)
Population not complex (n = 161)
Wrong patient population (n = 2)
Wrong intervention context (n = 39)
Not reporting empirical data (n = 39)
Abstract not in English or German (n = 1)
Editorial, commentary, opinion piece (n = 18)
No detail of complex social care needs (n = 1)
Included
Studies included in review (n = 20)

Country	Number of studies
United States	6
Netherlands	4
Singapore	2
United Kingdom	2
Argentina	1
Australia	1
Canada	1
China	1
Croatia	1
France	1
Germany	1
Italy	1
Poland	1
Spain	1



Professionals involved in the interventions

- Nurses 12
- Social Work 10
- Physician 11
- Geriatrician 3
- psychiatrist 1
- Psychologist 4
- Pharmacist 2
- Physiotherapist 2
- Occupational therapist 1

Findings – Characteristics

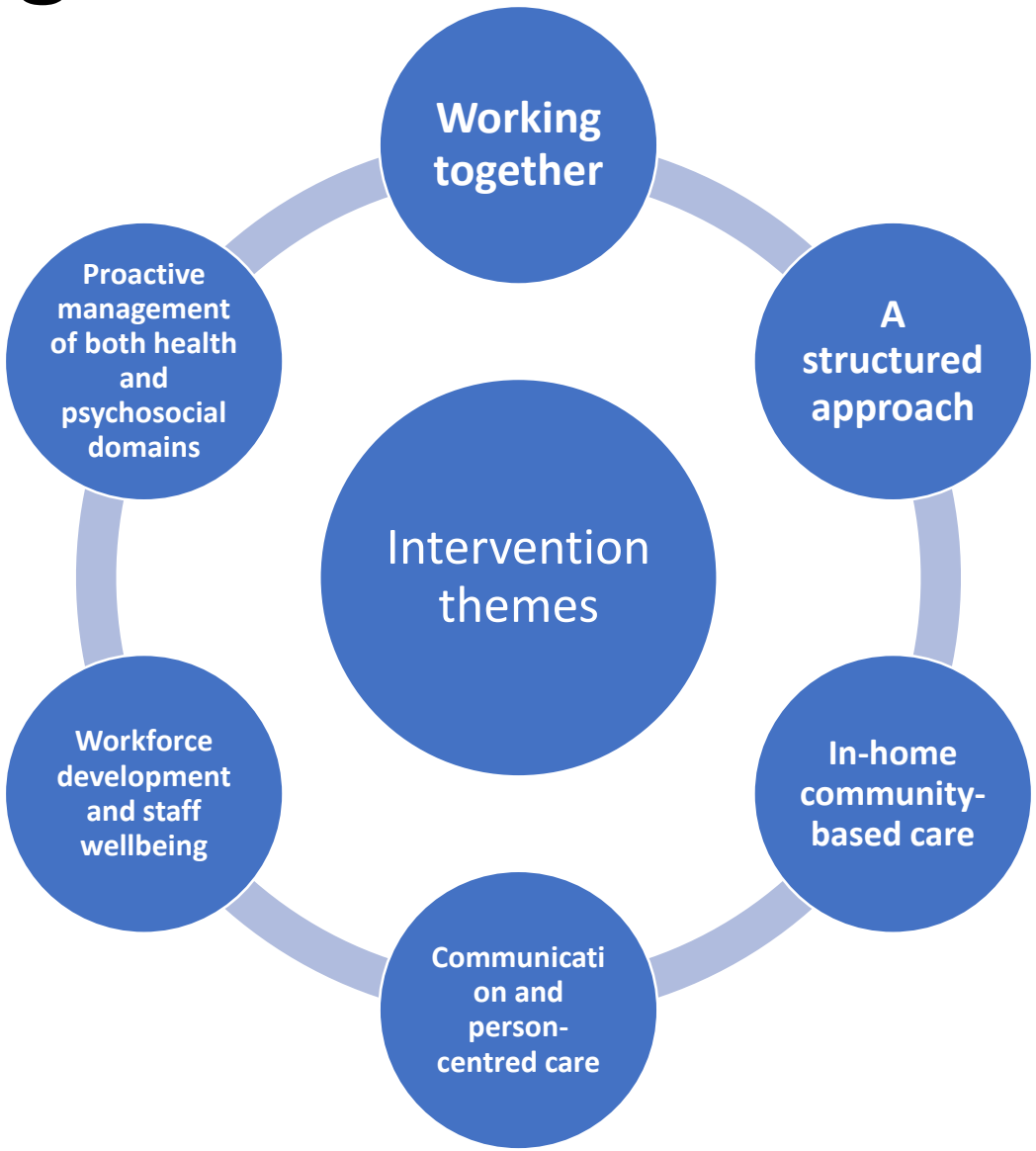
- Diabetes (11)
- Heart disease (11)
- Comorbidities
- Depression (9)
- Dementia (6)
- Mental illness (5)
- Range of behavioural characteristics, e.g. homelessness, financial issues, nutritional issues, transport, unmet social needs (isolation), refusing care

How was complex health and social care needs defined?

- No agreed definition or assessment tool
- Four studies used this tool:
- https://www.intermedconsortium.com/instrument/
- Different versions for different contexts

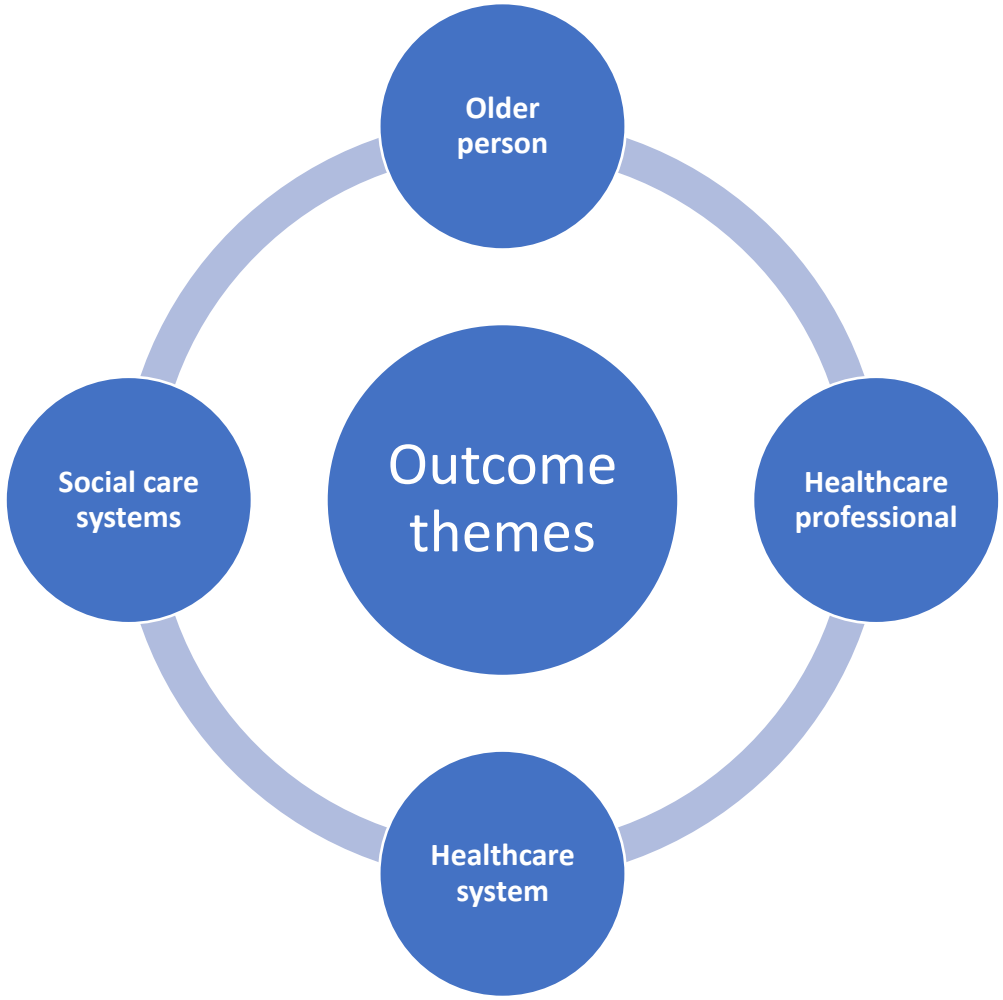
INTERMED Scale 0 to 60
Included studies used a score of 16 or 17 to identify people for the intervention

Findings – Interventions



Working together	A structured approach	In-home community-based care	Communication and person-centred care	Proactive management of both health and psychosocial domains	Workforce development and staff wellbeing
Multidisciplinary Interdisciplinary Inter agency Integrated care team Co-location	Case management case finding care coordination Shared treatment plans Shared decision-making	Home-based primary care	Based on goals person wants to achieve Person centred Personalised Social support	Higher disease severity (e.g., Type 2 diabetes) increases coordination challenges Psychologist and psychiatrist as core team members	Dedicated training Academic training Specialist geriatric training

Findings – Outcomes



Older person
Less time from assessment to referral (1)
Fewer hospital admissions (1)
Improved relationship with care providers (2, 8, 10)
Improvement in depressive symptoms (5)
Improved understanding of role of health care providers (11)
Improved access to care (10)
Personalised attention and social connection (10)
Improvements in health status including physical function and nutrition and reduced biosocial needs (15, 20)
Improved communication and engagement (7, 12, 13)
Improved health related outcomes (5, 19, 20)

Healthcare professional
Mutual learning and collective knowledge (1)
Represent (the patient) (2)
Buffer between client and the system (2)
GP had better overview of patient (4)
Less unexpected demands (4)
Psychology support to assist staff (6)
Undertake tasks outside normal job (8)
Greater confidence, skill and knowledge (9)
Improved understanding of patient (6)
Improved support for staff (6)
Reduced unexpected demands (4)

Healthcare system
Reduced cost (1, 16)
Reduced hospital attendance and admission (1, 13, 17)
Shorter hospital stay (11)
Better collaboration (2)
Increased efficiency (6)
More primary care usage (11)
Reduced healthcare needs (20)
Cost higher than usual care (19)
Reduced utilisation of healthcare services (13, 17)

Social care systems
Shifts cost from primary care to community based care (16)
Increased referrals to multisector services (12)

Implications for the Healthcare system

- Working together with a structured and collaborative approach is likely to lead to better outcomes for a person with complex health and psychosocial needs
- There may be an added benefit to having a psychiatric or psychology input
- The acute hospital system is likely to benefit, though there may be a shift in costs/effort to Primary Care

What are the implications for social workers?

- It is imperative to address both the health condition and the psychosocial needs
- However, the core focus has to be the psychosocial domain
- Is this an opportunity for social work to provide leadership?
- A shared understanding of the threshold for an intervention to support someone with complex needs

What was not highlighted in the studies

- Technical skill, e.g. ADM, Human Rights
- Linkage with other policies and procedures (e.g. safeguarding)
- If there is an adverse event for a person with complex needs, does it mean the intervention failed?

We have to talk about fluffy

Critical Thinking and Professional Judgement

Future work

- Inform Policy, Procedure, Protocol and Guidance document
- Quantifying the impact on the health and social care system and on individual staff – including effort, stress and anxiety for healthcare workers
- Test an intervention and evaluate outcomes including cost benefit analysis
- Skills, competency and knowledge required to support interventions

The End!

Thank you for your attention!