

Young migrants from North Africa. What do we know?

A scoping review to explore their health status and access to health services.

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INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, adolescents and young adult migrants from North Africa (NA) arrived in Europe in large numbers¹. Field observations reported features not previously described in other similar groups including high mobility across borders, precarious living conditions, use of psychotropic substances and high-risk behaviours such as prostitution and illegal activities^{2,3}. Existing health literature on this population seems to be limited and fragmented.



OBJECTIVES

To better understand NA adolescents and young adult migrants' health status, access and use of healthcare.

METHODS

We conducted a scoping review following Arksey and O'Malley process and recommendations by Joanna Briggs Institute and based on the Population-Concept-Context (PCC) framework^{4,5}.

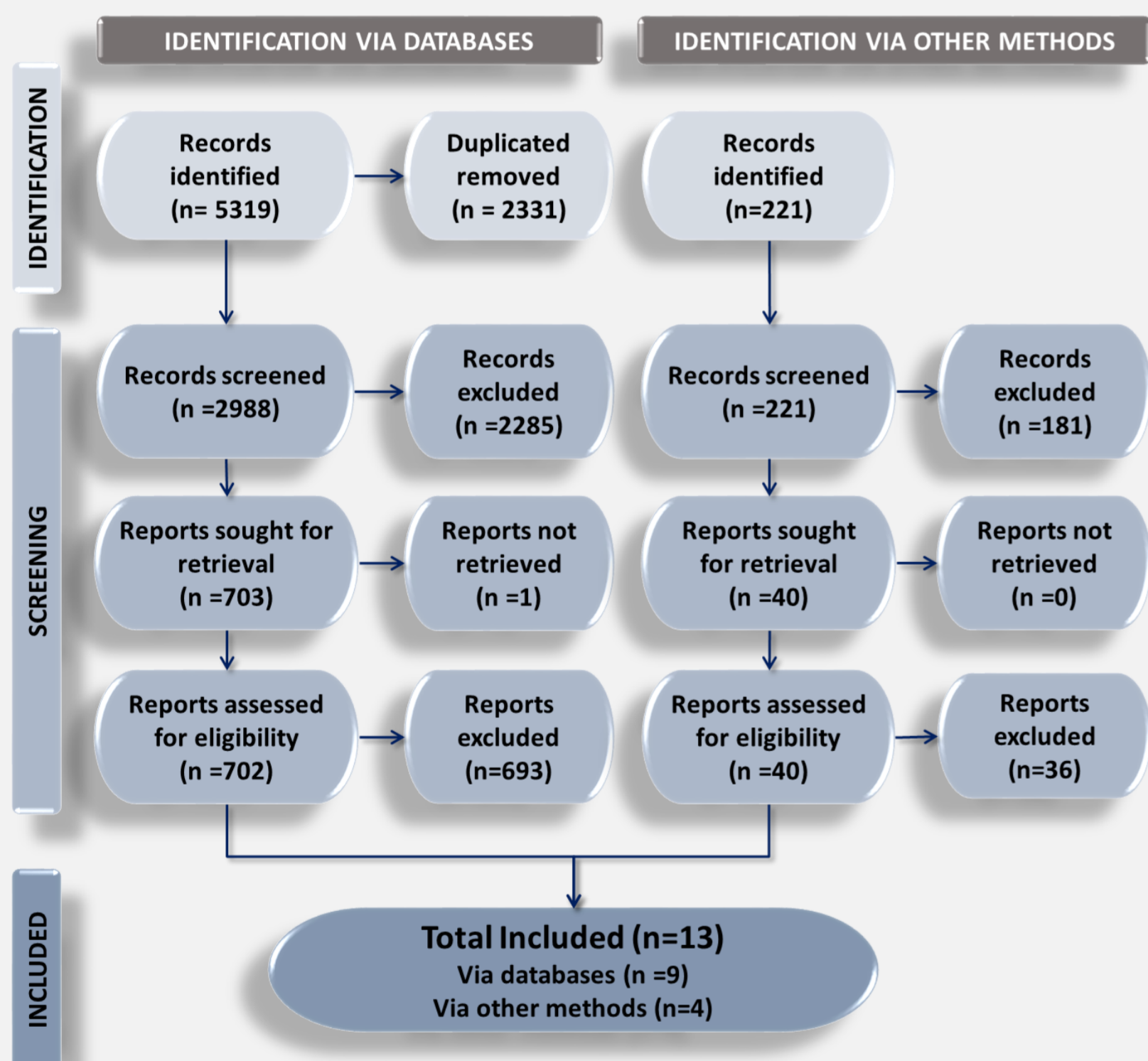
We searched the following databases:

CINAHL, Cochrane, Embase, PubMed, PsycINFO and Web of Science to identify peer-reviewed articles and non-index reports. We also reviewed all the references of the records included.

INCLUSION CRITERIA

STUDIES	POPULATION	CONCEPT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer-reviewed articles Non-indexed reports From 1990 to 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migrants from NA countries First generation migrant Any legal condition From 10 to 24 years old Any gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health status Health services Accessibility to health services Use of health services
LANGUAGE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English, French, Spanish 		CONTEXT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studies conducted in European region (WHO)

RESULTS



STUDIES

Most studies (n=9) were published between 2015 and 2021. All studies were observational, 9 were cross-sectional and 3 were case reports. Seven studies included NA migrants only.

POPULATION

The overall number of persons included was 1374, most of them being from Morocco (1150). Nine studies included only males and 11 focused on unaccompanied minors. For most studies (n=10) age range varied between 12 and 18 years old

CONCEPT

Five studies explore aspects related to general health, with dental caries, iron deficiency and dermatological issues reported as the most prevalent disorders. Six studies provide information on infectious diseases. Mental health and substance use was also explored in 5 studies, benzodiazepines and cannabis being the most often reported substances. Only 3 studies covered service provision all emphasizing the importance of transcultural approach.

CONTEXT

Studies were conducted in Spain (n=7), France (n=4) and Germany (n=2).

DISCUSSION

This scoping review assesses current knowledge on the emerging issue of health status of NA adolescents and young adults in Europe and their use of health services. This knowledge appears to be severely limited in quantity and quality with important gaps, such as females and young adults above 18 years old. Mental health including substance use, oral health, iron deficiency, skin conditions and latent tuberculosis were most commonly mentioned. Intercultural and complexity of issues in service delivery emerged.

CONCLUSIONS

Scarce documentation of this group justifies a call for additional research, targeting notably hard-to-reach and underrepresented groups to better understand their health status and needs. Additional research should also provide data to adjust and adapt current health services and interventions. International collaboration and initiatives at European level are necessary.

Acknowledgement

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Did you ever work with such migrants?

We are looking for experts. Please get in touch with us at Eva.RocilloArechaga@hug.ch



References

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