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The Positive Impact of Gender Affirming Care on Mental Health Outcomes Among Transgender & Nonbinary LGBTQ+ Adolescents and Young Adults, A Review of Global Literature

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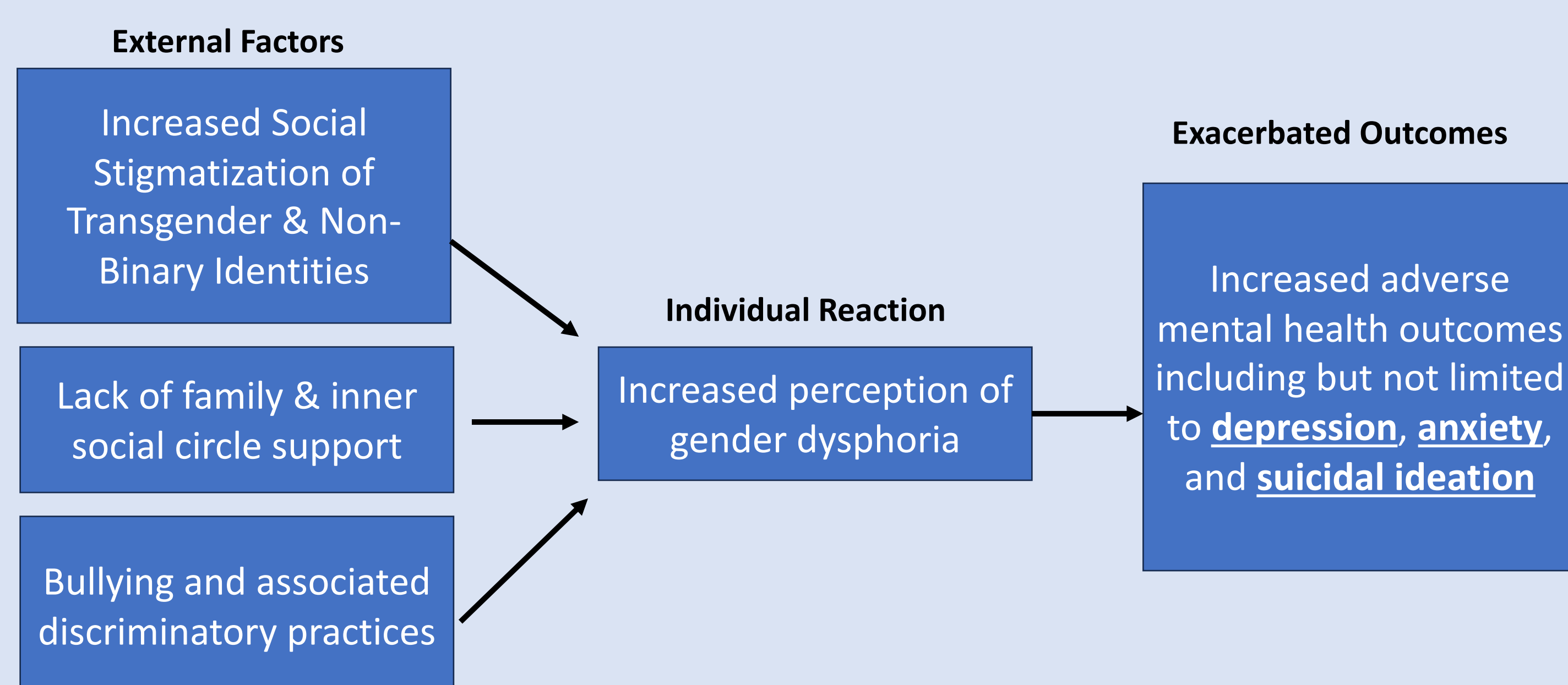
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Background & Significance

- LGBTQ Adolescents and young adults (AYA) face an **increased** mental health burden of **depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation** due to multilevel factors such as higher-levels of social rejection, lack of family support, and the social stigmatization of transgender and nonbinary identities
- Gender Affirming Care has been proven to reduce gender dysphoria experienced by transgender and nonbinary persons
 - Therapies include **counseling, hormone therapy, and gender affirming surgery**
- Within the United States, **over 520 anti-LGBTQ bills** have been introduced to state legislatures
 - 26 of which directly impact healthcare access for transgender and nonbinary (TNB) youth
- This literature review aims to examine the role of gender affirming care in context of mental health outcomes, specifically among TNB AYA

Figure 1.0 Adverse Health Outcome Model, Bartosz Skiba



Methods

- Inclusion Criteria:**
 - Population (transgender, gender nonconforming, non-binary, genderqueer)
 - Location (Global)
 - Language (English Language)
 - Date Range (Last 10 years)
- Exclusion Criteria**
 - Age (adults)
 - Temporality (older than 10 years)
 - Non-mental health outcomes

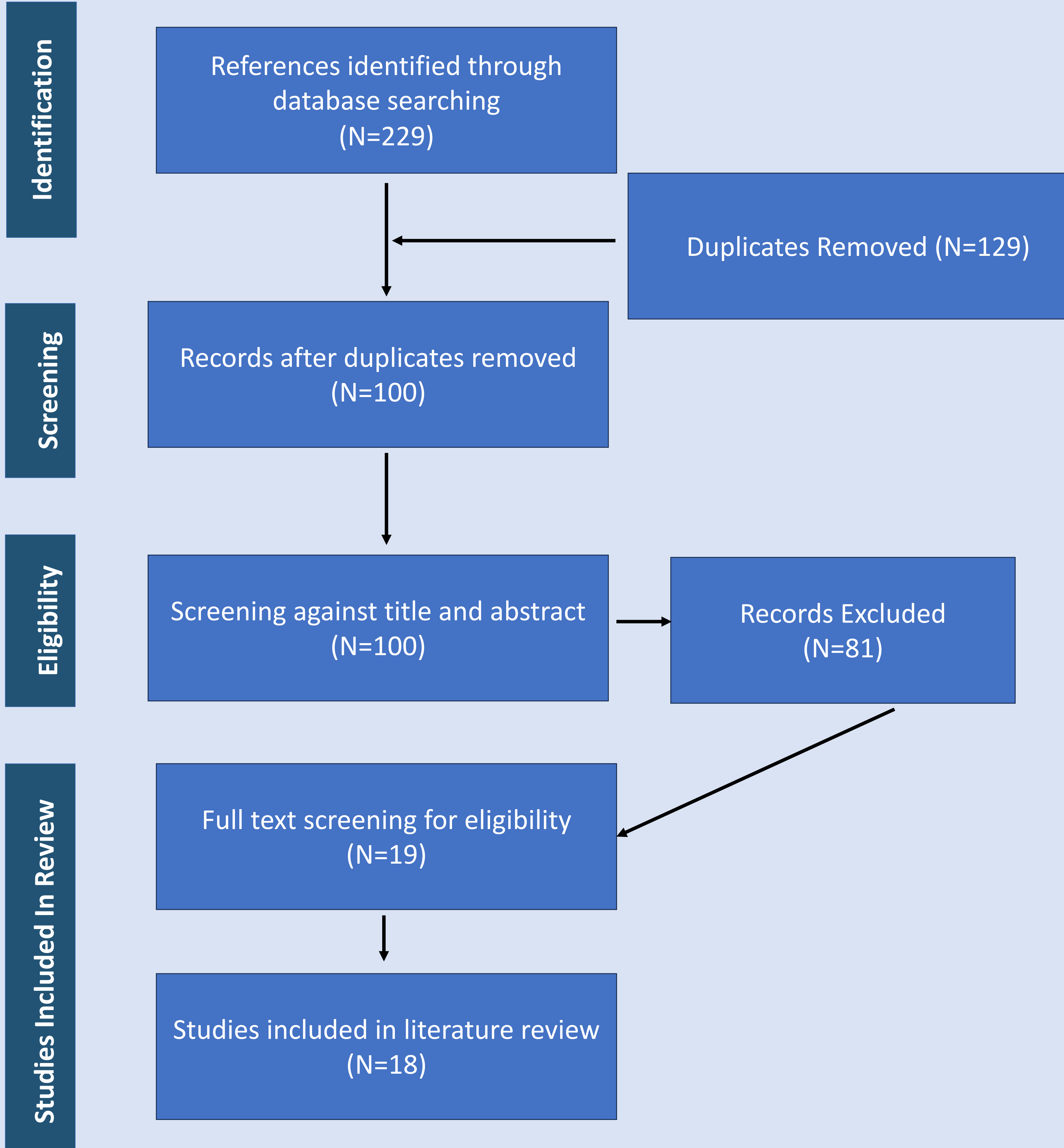
Methods Continued

Scales and measures considered:

- GAD-7, Anxiety
- PHQ-9, Depression
- Screening Criteria, single reviewer, represented in *Figure: 2.0 Modified PRISMA Flow Chart*

Figure 2.0 Modified PRISMA Flowchart

Database	Date	Search String	(N)
PubMed	12/01/23	((transgender) AND (youth)) AND (mental health outcomes) AND (gender-affirming care)	66
CINAHL	12/01/23	((transgender) AND (youth)) AND (mental health outcomes) AND (gender-affirming care)	9
Embase	12/01/23	((transgender) AND (youth)) AND (mental health outcomes) AND (gender-affirming care)	77
PsychInfo	12/01/23	((transgender) AND (youth)) AND (mental health outcomes) AND (gender-affirming care)	20



Results

- N=18** articles met screening and inclusion criteria to be included in the final synthesis
- N=15 studies featured original quantitative research
- N=3 were review articles
- N=17** articles included in the synthesis reported a **decrease in depression symptoms and suicidality** among TNB youth taking gender affirming hormone (GAH) and gender affirming surgery (GAS)
 - Depression symptoms were measured using PHQ-9
 - 1 out of 18 studies concluded that decrease in suicidality among a cohort taking GAH was not statistically significant
 - Depression & suicidality symptoms varied between GAS procedures (IE: Double Mastectomy vs Vaginoplasty / Phalloplasty)

Discussion & Future Directions

- All 18 studies selected in the synthesis support the call for the expansion of protection for gender affirming care (GAH & GAS) for the TNB AYA patient population

Limitations:

- Studies included in the synthesis failed to capture patients coming from various socioeconomic statuses
- Data collected were exclusively quantitative, failing to capture unique lived experiences
- No studies conducted outside of the United States

Directions for Future Research:

- Qualitative analysis of lived-experiences of TNB AYA actively partaking in gender affirming care
- Quantitative analysis of gender affirming surgeries (GAS) and their respective effect on reducing adverse mental health outcomes

Acknowledgements & References

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References On QR Code