

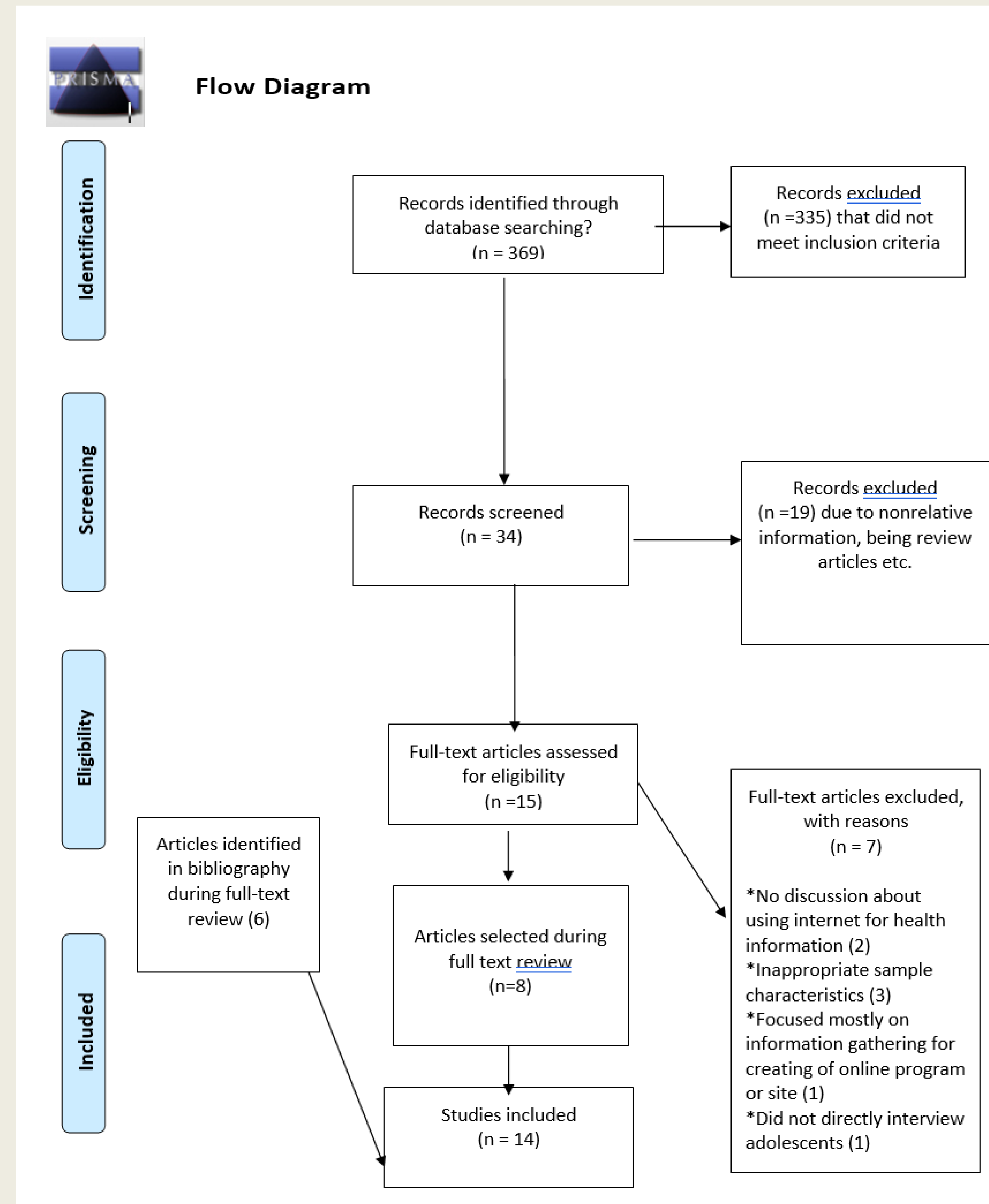
Internet Use Behavior Among Adolescents and Young Adults With Chronic Illnesses

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Introduction: Approximately 25% of adolescents and young adults (AYA) have special healthcare needs. With the advances in healthcare the number of children reaching adulthood has increased. Transitioning from a pediatric to an adult model of health care is an important and challenging period for this age group. AYA with chronic illnesses residing in rural and inner-city areas face the added burden of healthcare access issues due to location and resource access issues. This generation of AYA are also known as the internet generation and frequent online sites for many reasons. Because of this, use of technology in the transition process for AYA living in remote or low resourced areas has great potential to improve health. The purpose of this study was to find out the barriers, problems and concerns AYA with chronic illnesses have, especially as it relates to using the internet for health-related information.

Methods: A systematic review was conducted using three databases CINAHL, Medline and PsycINFO. Keywords (e.g., adolescent, young adult, chronic illness, internet, social media) were combined using Boolean operators “AND” and “OR”. Inclusion criteria were articles focused on AYA (16-25) use of internet or social media for health-related information, published in English-language format between 2005-2020. The initial search yielded 369 articles, 335 were eliminated as not meeting the inclusion criteria.



Results:

Of the 34 remaining articles that were evaluated in detail, 14 were determined to be eligible for inclusion in this review.

The most common issues of concerns identified by AYA were privacy, security, and misinformation.

Participants did not feel comfortable disclosing health information online or on social media due to privacy concerns.

They were also concerned that the information available on the internet might be unreliable.

Discussion: AYA use the internet for multiple reasons but they are concerned about sharing personal health information online due to privacy concerns. They are also worried about untrustworthy health information posted online. If transition preparedness programs are created with an online element, care should be taken that privacy is protected and that the site clearly informs visitors that its' information is reliable and trustworthy.