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## Background

The global population of people aged 65 years and over is expected to rise from 761 million in 2021 to 1.6 billion by 2050. Many of these older adults have multiple comorbidities and functional impairments that make them particularly vulnerable during acute hospitalisation. Engagement in meaningful activities can be vital to older people's care, particularly in acute hospitals. Evidence suggests that such engagement can have a positive impact on the patients' hospital journeys. To ensure individualised support, it is important to understand the purpose of meaningful activities for older adults in acute hospital settings, including their definitions, implementation methods, and impact on patients.

## Methods

The review stages identified in the Arksey and O'Malley framework were used. The electronic databases MEDLINE, CINAHL and PsycINFO were searched to discover relevant articles on meaningful activities/ older adults in acute hospital care. The results are reported according to the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) extension for scoping reviews.

### Initial Themes

- Exercise programmes and group activities, socialising with staff and peers
- Improved physical well-being
- Enhanced Mental Health
- Sense of purpose and autonomy
- Willingness to engage
- Activity suggestions

### Main Themes

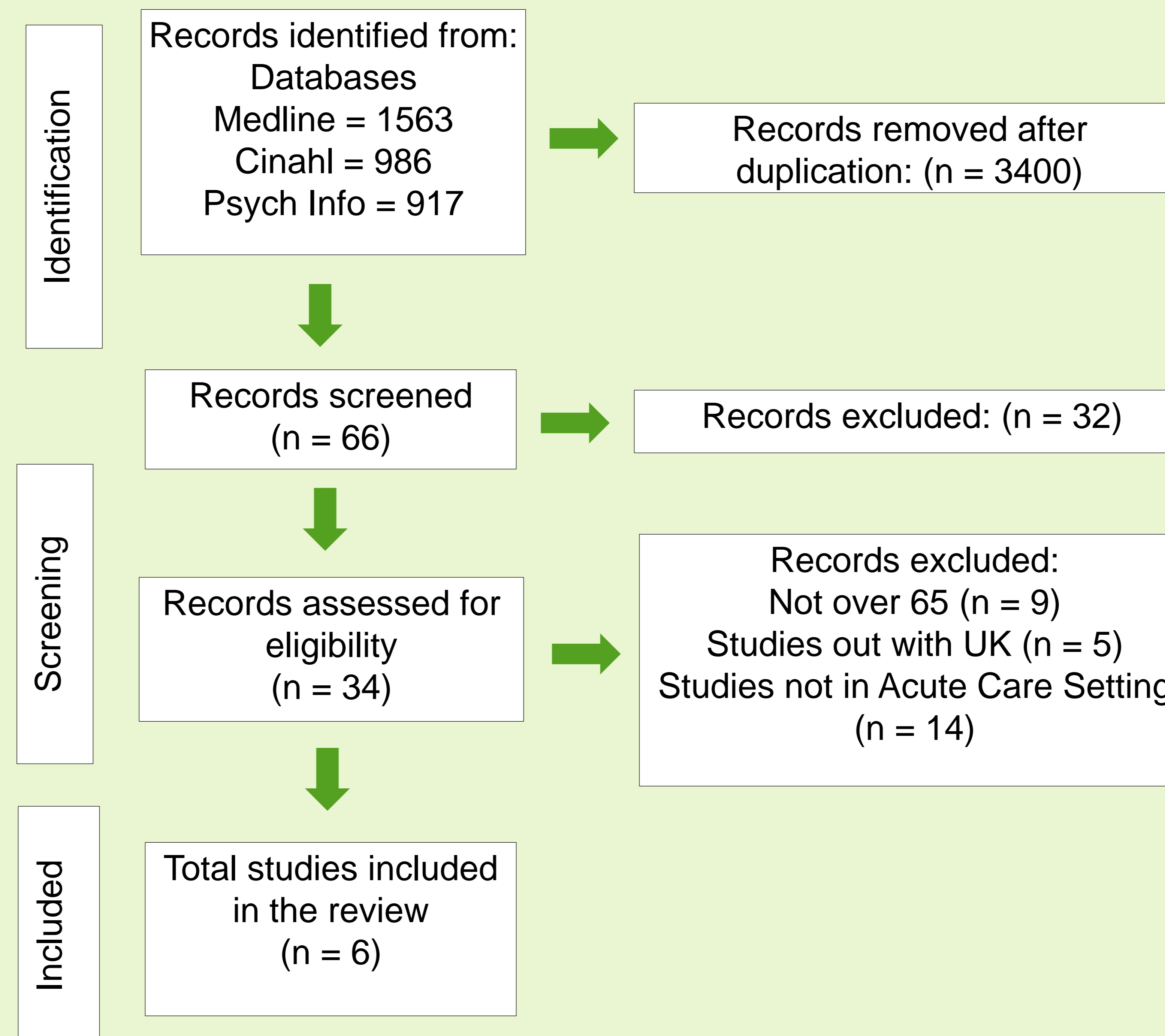
- Physical, social and art activities
- Meaningful activity benefits
- Desire for meaningful activity

## Aims and Objective

The aims and objectives of this scoping review were to:

- provide evidence of the impact of engagement in meaningful activities on older adults;
- identify barriers to the delivery of these activities; and to
- source evidence regarding older adults' experiences and perspectives on meaningful activities in hospitals.

### Identification of new studies via databases and registers



## Conclusion

The findings regarding the meaningful activity experiences of older adults in acute hospitals indicate that comprehensive models of care that embrace physical, psychological, social and spiritual frameworks are required. Summarisation of the data led to the identification of three themes: "physical, social and art activities", "the benefits of meaningful activities", and "the desire for meaningful activity". Regarding the latter, patients in the studies highlighted the importance of taking part in meaningful activities during their acute hospital journeys. Regarding the first two themes, the reported observations and reviews of the evidence indicate that interventions that include physical exercise, music and art therapy improve mental health and well-being and alleviate anxiety and depression in older adults. Loneliness and isolation among some older patients may be eradicated through social interaction. However, implementation of such models in acute hospital settings poses a challenge, given the shortage of staff, particularly those trained in meaningful activity.

## Future Implications

Improving emotional well-being for older adults in hospital requires embedding meaningful activity into everyday care. Future work should focus on staff training, stronger interdisciplinary collaboration, and person-centred approaches that reflect individual interests. Continued research and policy advocacy will be key to sustaining and scaling these improvements.