

# Barriers perceived by medical students when considering a career in geriatric medicine.

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## Background

- Despite the UK's increasing life expectancy, and increasing elderly population, there is an overwhelming lack of Geriatricians (BGS, 2023)
- There is only 1 consultant Geriatrician per 8,031 patients over 65 in the UK (2022) (BGS, 2023)
- Literature suggests a concerning trend of medical students holding negative attitudes towards Geriatric Medicine (GM) (Fitzgerald et al 2003, Meibroom et al 2015, Weissman et al 2023)

Question: what are the barriers perceived by medical students when considering a career in geriatric medicine?

## Aim

Present a comprehensive synthesis of factors that drive the negative attitude towards GM in medical students. Generate a holistic set of suggestions on how to increase medical student interest in GM.

## Results

### Key themes:

1. **High emotional burden** (futility of care, depression and moral distress)
2. **Caring for patients with complex needs**
3. **Negative preconceptions of non-clinical factors** (prestige, salary, career progression)
4. **Negative influence of clinical educators**
5. **Lack of intellectual stimulation**
6. **Lack of exposure** (to the elderly, to the speciality)

## Discussion

Reasons for a lack of interest in pursuing GM as a career in medical students are complex and multifaceted; findings supported by prior research (Bagri & Tiberius 2010; Meibroom et al 2015; Higashi et al., 2018).

**Study limitations:** generalised, possibility of missed data (databases, articles not in English)

**Research Gap:** lack of information on UK medical students specifically.

**Suggestions and implications:** in order to increase interest in GM in medical students, the issues presented must be addressed promptly.

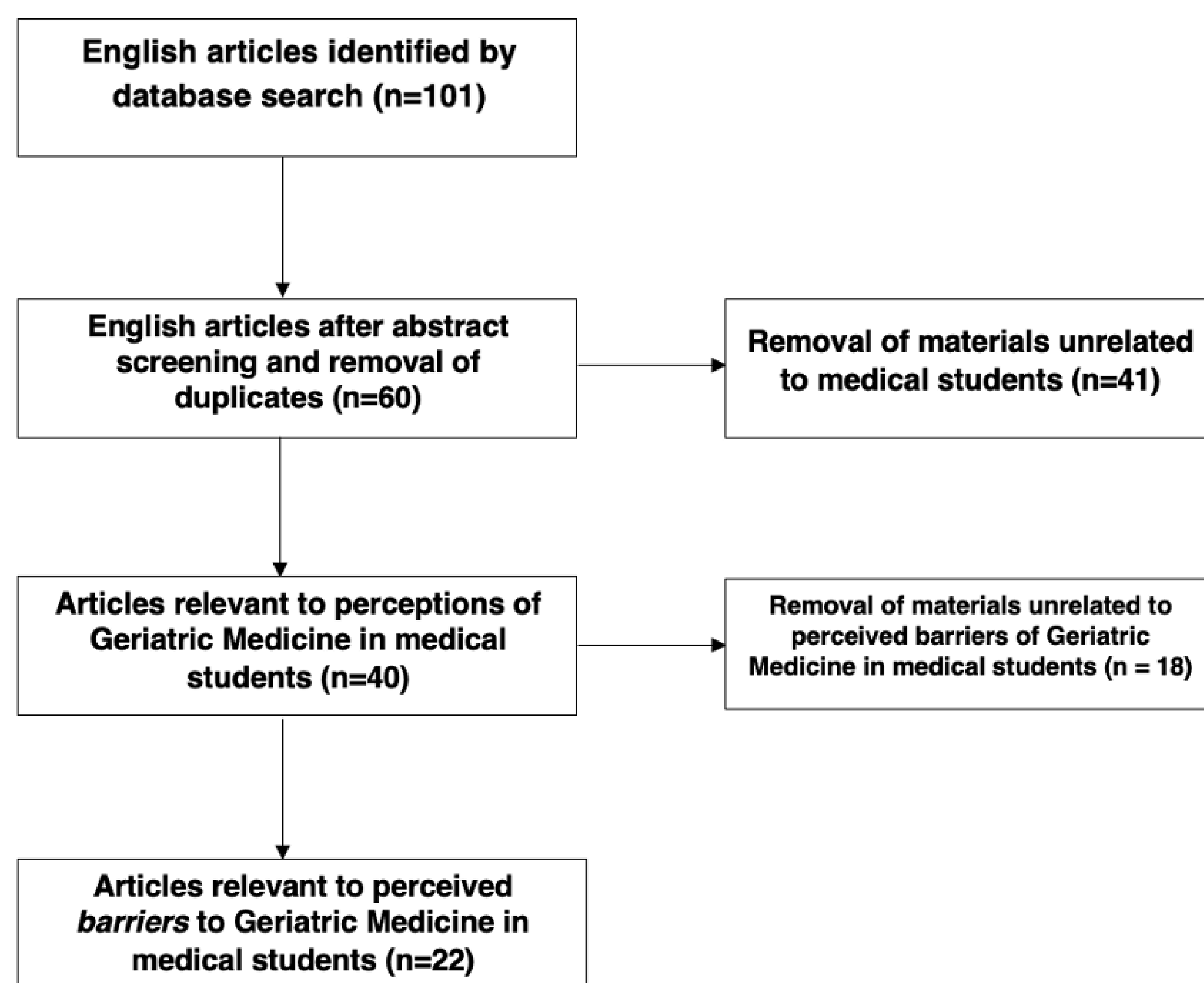
We present comprehensive set of suggestions to achieve this objective at the end of our paper. We are using this research to design surveys and focus groups to investigate barriers in UK medical students in order to make suggestions applicable to and effective in UK medical training programmes.

## Methods

MedLine search (July 2023) (Figure 1). MESH terms 'Geriatrics', 'Gerontology', 'medical student', 'career'.

**Inclusion:** peer-reviewed papers addressing why medical students may not pick GM as a speciality. Last 20 years.

**Exclusion:** studies that only examine healthcare professionals other than medical students. Papers not in English.



## References

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