




BMJ Open Systematic review of electronic health records to manage chronic conditions among displaced populations

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To cite: Buford A, Ashworth HC, Ezzeddine FL, *et al.* Systematic review of electronic health records to manage chronic conditions among displaced populations. *BMJ Open* 2022;12:e056987. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2021-056987

► Prepublication history and additional supplemental material for this paper are available online. To view these files, please visit the journal online (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2021-056987>).

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Received 06 September 2021
Accepted 15 August 2022



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ABSTRACT

Objectives The objective of this study was to assess the impact of electronic health records (EHRs) on health outcomes and care of displaced people with chronic health conditions and determine barriers and facilitators to EHR implementation in displaced populations.

Design A systematic review protocol was developed according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Systematic Reviews.

Data sources MEDLINE, Embase, PsycINFO, CINAHL, Health Technology Assessment, Epub Ahead of Print, In-Process and Other Non-Indexed Citations, Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials and Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews was searched from inception to 12 April 2021.

Eligibility criteria for selected studies Inclusion criteria were original research articles, case reports and descriptions of EHR implementation in populations of displaced people, refugees or asylum seekers with related chronic diseases. Grey literature, reviews and research articles unrelated to chronic diseases or the care of refugees or asylum populations were excluded. Studies were assessed for risk of bias using a modified Cochrane, Newcastle-Ottawa and Joanna Briggs Institute tools.

Data extraction and synthesis Two reviewers independently extracted data from each study using Covidence. Due to heterogeneity across study design and specific outcomes, a meta-analysis was not possible. An inductive thematic analysis was conducted using NVivo V.12 (QSR International, Melbourne, Australia). An inductive analysis was used in order to uncover patterns and themes in the experiences, general outcomes and perceptions of EHR implementation.

Results A total of 32 studies across nine countries were included: 14 in refugee camps/settlements and 18 in asylum countries. Our analysis suggested that EHRs improve health outcomes for chronic diseases by increasing provider adherence to guidelines or treatment algorithms, monitoring of disease indicators, patient counselling and patient adherence. In asylum countries, EHRs resource allocation to direct clinical care and public health services, as well as screening efforts. EHR implementation was facilitated by their adaptability and ability to integrate into management systems. However,

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

- ⇒ Our study is the first systematic review assessing the implementation of electronic health records (EHR) for displaced populations and how they impact chronic disease outcomes.
- ⇒ The heterogeneity of outcomes data reported across studies led to analysing and synthesising the findings in a qualitative, narrative approach rather than conducting a quantitative meta-analysis.
- ⇒ Our study was limited by using only a qualitative analysis and future work is needed to quantitatively assess the effectiveness of EHRs in this setting.
- ⇒ While we could not assess effectiveness, our qualitative approach allows for an important description of the barriers and facilitators of implementing EHRs for displaced populations in future studies.

barriers to EHR development, deployment and data analysis were identified in refugee settings.

Conclusion Our results suggest that well-designed and integrated EHRs can be a powerful tool to improve healthcare systems and chronic disease outcomes in refugee settings. However, attention should be paid to the common barriers and facilitating actions that we have identified such as utilising a user-centred design. By implementing adaptable EHR solutions, health systems can be strengthened, providers better supported and the health of refugees improved.

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that there were over 80 million displaced people worldwide in 2019.¹ This number is increasing globally, and is exacerbated by significant barriers that make returning home increasingly burdensome for refugees.¹ Forced displacement has doubled since 2010, and with the rise of extreme weather events and conflict, it is predicted that this trend will continue over the next decade.^{1,2} Displaced populations are uniquely vulnerable to threats to their health including

violence, food insecurity, infectious diseases and exacerbation of underlying chronic conditions.²⁻⁴ Chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and depression are highly prevalent in refugee populations, which may lead to severe morbidity and mortality especially when there is limited access to healthcare.⁵⁻⁷

Delivering care to displaced populations poses unique challenges. Healthcare for refugees has relied on refugee camp-based care and limited services sponsored by host country governments.^{8,9} Uncertain living situations, continued displacement and inconsistent access to medical services present barriers to longitudinal care, particularly for chronic diseases.^{4,9} Additionally, refugee clinics often operate without formal systems for recording patient information, further amplifying the challenges of irregular care.⁷ These disjointed systems limit continuity of care for people with chronic diseases, overall increasing patient burden and perpetuating poor health outcomes.¹⁰ When refugees are able to reach new host countries, they face barriers to accessing care that meets their needs, including prohibited cost, language barriers and the inability to reliably access longitudinal health records.^{11,12}

A previous systematic review of health records for refugees showed that the general use of medical records improved health outcomes in the refugee population.⁸ However, no such consensus has been reached on the use of electronic health records (EHR) in refugee care settings and their impact on health indicators. Moreover, to the best of our knowledge, no study has outlined the barriers and facilitators to implementing EHRs in refugee care settings. The aim of this systematic review is to (1) evaluate the impact of EHRs in the care of displaced people with chronic health conditions, and (2) identify the barriers and facilitators to successful implementation of an EHR system for refugees.

METHODS

Search strategy

A systematic review protocol was developed according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Systematic Reviews (PRISMA) checklist (online supplemental appendix 1). A comprehensive search query (online supplemental appendix 2) was conducted in English and run on nine databases (MEDLINE, Embase, PsycINFO, CINAHL, Health Technology Assessment, Epub Ahead of Print, In-Process and Other Non-Indexed Citations, Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials and Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews) from inception to 12 April 2021.

Selection of studies

The search results were uploaded to Covidence, an online reference distilling programme (Covidence, Veritas Health Information, Melbourne, Australia) to allow for collaborative screening by multiple reviewers. Articles were independently screened by title and abstract

based on a list of inclusion and exclusion criteria to judge the eligibility of the identified studies. Eligible studies included a patient population that was internally or externally displaced and must have evaluated an EHR or described implementation of EHR solutions, to track or treat chronic communicable and non-communicable diseases. We also included studies that were randomised control trials, observational studies or qualitative studies. Exclusion criteria included diagnosis of non chronic or non-communicable diseases such as acute physical trauma or acute infections such as upper respiratory tract infections. These were excluded because we were interested in seeing how EHRs improved the care of displaced and migratory populations over time. We also excluded grey literature, and non-original research designs. The same blinded reviewers then screened articles by full text for potential eligibility. Any conflicts in inclusion were resolved by an independent arbiter. All included studies were assessed by two reviewers for methodological quality and risk of bias.

Critical appraisal

We used a modified Cochrane risk of bias assessment tool for the randomised control trials,¹³ the Newcastle-Ottawa tool for observational and non-randomised control trials¹⁴ and The Joanna Briggs Institute assessment for qualitative studies (online supplemental appendix 3). Any discrepancies in the assessments were reconciled by consensus.

Data extraction

Two reviewers (AB and FE) independently extracted data from each study using the Covidence data extraction form. The following data were extracted: study year; study type/method and setting; population; sample size and method; study objectives.

Synthesis of results

Due to heterogeneity across study design and specific outcomes, a meta-analysis was not possible. An inductive thematic analysis was conducted using NVivo V.12 (QSR International, Melbourne, Australia). An inductive analysis was used in order to uncover patterns and themes in the experiences, general outcomes and perceptions of EHR implementation.¹⁵ Two independent reviewers (AB and FE) developed an initial codebook with a sample of 10 articles. After comparing and consolidating a final codebook, the two reviewers both independently coded the remaining studies with an inter-rater reliability kappa score of 0.82. Studies were grouped by population as refugees, internally displaced persons or asylum seekers. Broad categories were developed from the extracted data related to evidence on effectiveness of EHRs and experiences with EHRs. Experiences were categorised into barriers and facilitators of implementing EHRs.

Patient and public involvement

This research did not involve patients or the public in the design, conduct, reporting or dissemination plans.

Ethical review

This research did not require an institutional board review approval as the data were collected from existing online data bases and publicly available. This research did not involve any human subjects.

RESULTS

Description of included studies

Of the 225 identified studies, 32 were included in the final analysis (PRISMA chart).¹⁶ Included studies are summarised in [table 1](#). The 32 included studies were conducted in nine countries. An important differentiating factor between the studies was the setting in which they were conducted: refugee camps or settlements (n=14) or asylum countries (n=18). As the implications of EHRs in these two settings are markedly different, they are presented and discussed separately below. Most of the included studies were cohort studies (n=20), followed by cross-sectional studies (n=8) and descriptive studies on implementation (n=4). The most commonly studied populations were Palestinian (n=11) and Syrian (n=6) refugees. The most commonly studied health conditions were diabetes (n=12), hypertension (n=8) and psychiatric illnesses such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (n=3). Fourteen studies assessed the impact of EHRs on health outcomes within refugee camps or settlements for displaced people.^{4 10 17–26} Nineteen studies assessed the impact of EHRs on health outcomes in populations after arriving in an asylum country.^{27–45}

Quality assessment of included studies

According to the critical appraisal tools described in the methods section, 20 articles were of medium–high quality, nine were of medium quality and three were low-quality. The qualitative studies demonstrated acceptable methodological quality but did not report on the influence of the researcher. The cross-sectional studies and cohort studies were of medium quality in part due to suboptimal measurements of the exposure and outcomes and a lack of clarity around the identification of confounding variables. The one randomised control study was of a medium–high quality due to an overall low response rate.

Impact of EHRs on chronic disease outcomes in displaced populations

All 32 studies discussed the impact that EHRs had on chronic disease outcomes. They suggested that EHRs improved both objective measures, such as markers of disease severity (blood pressure and haemoglobin A1c, HbA1c), and subjective measures such as continuity of care. The explanation behind these improvements was not because EHRs are solutions on their own, but because they were a tool for improving communication, documentation, adherence to guidelines and delivery mechanisms.^{4 10 17–23 25 26 42}

Impact in refugee camps or settlements

Three landmark studies made up most of the literature on EHRs implemented in refugee camps. Two of these were cohort studies represented by multiple publications: one conducted among Palestinian refugees living in Jordan and one conducted in Lebanon for Syrian refugees across 10 health facilities. The third study was a randomised controlled trial (RCT) conducted across 16 primary healthcare sites in refugee camps and rural areas of Lebanon.²⁵ These three studies collectively showed that a well-established EHR could have significant impacts on improving hypertension and diabetes management.^{4 10 17–23 25} These studies also discussed how EHRs improved health outcomes, citing increased provider adherence to guidelines or treatment algorithms, monitoring of clinical indicators, patient counselling and patient adherence.^{4 10 17 19 20 22}

Khader *et al* demonstrated that EHRs decreased the morbidity and mortality of hypertension and diabetes after 1 year by increasing screening and adherence to treatment guidelines.^{22 23 46–48} The EHR improved physicians' abilities to track a patient's hypertension over time and adjust medications appropriately through a standardised algorithm.^{19 46} In many parts of the world, diabetes management is based on poorly documented data that is collected at irregular intervals. This hinders a provider's understanding of both short-term and long-term blood glucose trends required for optimal management. Notably, Khader *et al* found that EHR implementation increased the continuity of data on postprandial blood sugars for diabetes patients.^{46 47} This allowed clinicians to better titrate medications and dietary counselling.^{46 47} It was also noted that EHRs allowed for better tracking of patients and improved follow-up on missed appointments or missed prescription refills.²³ Khader *et al* implemented an EHR-driven system to flag patients which enabled providers 'to encourage patients to attend (their appointment) the next quarter so that continuity of care and uninterrupted drug intake are maintained'.⁴⁶

Doocy *et al* showed that metrics for both hypertension and diabetes improved when utilising an EHR and patients reported increased satisfaction with clinical care.^{4 10 17} The authors cited three potential reasons for the improvement in health outcomes: (1) increased rate of history-taking and data collection, (2) more frequent and accurate recording of chronic disease metrics and (3) more frequent lifestyle counselling compared with paper records.^{10 17} Regarding history taking, Doocy *et al* noted, 'the proportion of patients reporting that the provider took a medical history during the enrolment phase (72/101 patients, 71.3%) increased by 16.6% to 87.9% (160/182)'.¹⁷ Likewise, physicians were more likely to record blood pressure, body mass index and blood sugar levels with EHRs compared with paper records ($p<0.001$).¹⁰ They were also more likely to discuss dietary modification ($p<0.001$) and smoking cessation ($p=0.06$).¹⁰

Table 1 Summary of included studies

Authors (year of publication)	Electronic medical record (EMR) used	Location	Study type	Number of participants	Patient population	Health conditions
Berkowitz <i>et al</i> (2016) ²⁷	EMR through partners health	Massachusetts, USA	Retrospective longitudinal cohort study	3174	Refugees, Spanish-speaking non-refugee immigrants	Diabetes
Darwish and Muldoon (2020) ⁴⁴	EMR Nightingale on demand	Ottawa, Canada	Cross-sectional retrospective study	338	Syrian refugees receiving care at temporary triage clinics	General characterisation of population and chronic diseases
Doocy <i>et al</i> (2017) ¹⁷	Sana mHealth, clinic-based medical records	South, Bekaa, Beirut Lebanon	Longitudinal cohort study	1020	Syrian and Lebanese refugees	Hypertension or type II diabetes
Doocy <i>et al</i> (2018) ¹⁸	Magpi mobile data	South, Bekaa, Beirut, Mount Lebanon	Longitudinal cohort study	793	Syrian and Lebanese refugees	Hypertension or type II diabetes
Doocy <i>et al</i> (2017) ¹⁷	Magpi mobile data	Lebanon	Longitudinal cohort study	1020	Syrian and Lebanese refugees	Hypertension or diabetes
Goodman <i>et al</i> (2018) ³⁶	Turbomed	Dresden, Germany	Retrospective cohort study	2753	Refugee patients (Syrian, Afghani, Iraqi and other)	General characterisation of population and chronic diseases
Goosen <i>et al</i> (2015) ³⁵	MOA EMR database	The Netherlands	Retrospective cohort study	4854	Pregnant asylum seekers	HIV, pregnancy
Hanna <i>et al</i> (2015) ³⁷	Epic	Pittsburg, PA, USA	Retrospective cross-sectional study	74	Bhutanese, Iraqi and Sudanese refugees	General characterisation of population
Higgins <i>et al</i> (2019) ³⁸	EMR through International Family Medicine Clinic at University of Virginia	Charlottesville, VA, USA	Retrospective cohort study	80	Refugee patients from 60 countries including Iraq, Afghanistan, Bhutan	Diabetes
Hoffman, <i>et al</i> (2021) ³⁹	In-house EMR	Minneapolis/ St. Paul, USA	Retrospective cohort study	143	Karen refugees resettled between May 2011 and May 2013	General characterisation of population and chronic diseases
Khader <i>et al</i> (2012) ¹⁹	eHealth through United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA)	Amman, Jordan	Retrospective descriptive cohort study	4130	Palestinian refugees	Hypertension
Khader <i>et al</i> (2012) ¹⁹	eHealth through UNWRA	Amman, Jordan	Retrospective descriptive cohort study	2851	Palestinian refugees	Diabetes
Khader, Ballout <i>et al</i> (2014) ²³	eHealth through UNWRA	Jordan	Descriptive cohort study	288	Palestinian refugees	Diabetes and complications
Khader <i>et al</i> (2014) ²¹	eHealth through UNWRA	Nuzha, Taybeh, Marka, S. Baqaa, Baqaa and Suf Jordan	Retrospective cohort study	18 881	Palestinian refugees	Hypertension
Khader, Ballout <i>et al</i> (2014) ²²	eHealth through UNWRA	Amman, Jordan	Retrospective cohort study	119	Palestinian refugees	Diabetes and complications
Khader, Ballout <i>et al</i> (2014) ²³	eHealth through UNWRA	Amman, Jordan	Retrospective cohort study	2974	Palestinian refugees	Diabetes
Lagos-Gallego <i>et al</i> (2017) ²⁴	National health records system	Colombia	Retrospective cohort study	240 000	Colombian IDPs	PTSD
Maher (2012) ⁴⁰	E-health	N/A	Descriptive editorial review		Patients with NCDs and chronic infectious diseases	Hypertension, diabetes, HIV, tuberculosis

Continued

Table 1 Continued

Authors (year of publication)	Electronic medical record (EMR) used	Location	Study type	Number of participants	Patient population	Health conditions
Njeru <i>et al</i> (2017) ³⁴	EMR from clinics	Minneapolis and Rochester, MN, USA	Retrospective cohort study	13 456	Adult patients receiving primary care in internal medicine or family medicine	Type II diabetes
Oltrogge <i>et al</i> (2020) ⁴³	In-house EMR	Hamburg, Germany	Retrospective longitudinal observational study	1467	Patients at a refugee camp	General characterisation of population and chronic diseases
Olson <i>et al</i> (2017) ³³	Epi Info 7.1.5.	Syracuse, NY, USA	Longitudinal cohort study	1067	Refugee children seen in university-based refugee health programme	Obesity
Pohl <i>et al</i> (2017) ⁴¹	Hospital EMR	Basel, Switzerland	Retrospective cohort study	93	Paediatric refugees and asylum seekers seen	Multiple chronic diseases
Rossi <i>et al</i> (2009) ⁴⁵	In-house interfacility EMR	Lebanon	Description of EMR implementation	N/A	Palestinian refugees	Multiple chronic diseases
Santoro <i>et al</i> (2016) ⁵⁰	UNWRA eHealth System	Jordan	Description of EMR implementation	N/A	Palestinian refugees seen in UNWRA clinics	Hypertension of diabetes
Saleh <i>et al</i> (2018) ²⁵	mHealth	Lebanon	Randomised control trial	3481	Palestinian refugees	Hypertension of diabetes
Shapiro <i>et al</i> (2016) ³²	EMR through hospitals	Philadelphia, PA, USA	Retrospective longitudinal cohort study	129	Resettled refugee children visiting paediatric clinics	Obesity
Sengoren <i>et al</i> (2020) ⁴²	In-house EMR	Bursa, Turkey	Retrospective descriptive cross-sectional study	378 487	Syrian refugees and Turkish citizens	Chronic diseases pertinent to the chest
Skogberg <i>et al</i> (2019) ⁴⁹	National health records system	Oulu, Helsinki, Joutseno, Turku Finland	Cross-sectional study	1000	First-time asylum seekers	General characterisation of population and chronic diseases
Storck <i>et al</i> (2018) ³¹	Mobile patient survey	Muenster, Germany	Cross-sectional study	96	Paediatric refugees	General characterisation of population, PTSD
Wagner <i>et al</i> (2014) ³⁰	Khmer health advocates EMR database	Connecticut, USA	Prospective cohort study	301	Cambodian refugees	Hypertension, obesity, PTSD
Waldorf <i>et al</i> (2014) ²⁹	EMR through Boston Medical Center	Boston, MA, USA	Retrospective cohort study	100	Patients going through the refugee and immigrant health programme	Provider adherence to chronic disease screening
Walters and Sullivan (2016) ²⁸	EMR through country refugee medical assistance	Multnomah County, Oregon, USA	Prospective cohort study	2087	Refugees	Hepatitis B
IDPs, internally displaced persons; N/A, not applicable; NCDs, non-communicable diseases; PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder.						

The RCT conducted by Saleh *et al* showed that centres randomised to use a mobile EHR had significant improvements in blood pressure control ($p=0.03$) and mean decreases in HbA1c ($p<0.01$).²⁵ This study also integrated text messages into their EHR to remind patients about appointments and how to manage chronic conditions.²⁵ Other included studies demonstrated that EHRs improved error detection and staff productivity,²⁶ identification of PTSD among internally displaced persons in Columbia via one-on-one screening²⁴ and patient management following the internal development of an EHR in a hospital in Lebanon.⁴⁵

Impact in asylum countries

Nineteen studies assessed the impact of EHRs on chronic disease health outcomes for asylum seekers.^{27–45} The uses of EHRs in these studies ranged from screening measures to characterising the chronic diseases in a population to improving guidelines and reducing the health disparities in asylum populations compared with the general population.^{27–45}

Several studies commented on the utility of EHRs as screening tools for asylum populations. Higgins *et al* showed that using a pharmacist to systematically review patients flagged by EHRs for possible chronic diseases led to better pharmaceutical recommendations to optimise medical management.³⁸ Similarly, a study in primary care demonstrated that EHRs within hospitals could improve screening by flagging patients and creating reminders for care teams.²⁹ Another study conducted in the USA showed that the use of these same principles, specifically in screening for Hepatitis B, led to notable improvements in the proportion of patients linked to care and receiving treatment.²⁸

One advantage of EHRs cited throughout the literature was their ability to provide an avenue for better characterisation of diseases in asylum populations to inform public health interventions and clinical guidelines.^{31 35–37 41 49} A notable example of this was a study in Finland that used EHRs and survey data to develop a protocol to screen all asylum seekers entering the country.⁴⁹ This example provides a very powerful illustration of how national EHRs can support asylum seekers as they immigrate; a finding that was echoed in additional studies.^{32 33} Other studies in tertiary hospitals and regional care areas developed general guidelines for the care of asylum seekers.^{35 37} Further research sought to understand the prevalence of diseases such as obesity, diabetes and trauma-related mental health disorders.^{31 32 36} Overall, the literature reviewed found that screening and characterising populations allowed healthcare systems to address health disparities in asylum-seeking communities.^{29 49}

Barriers to implementing EHRs in displaced populations

There were 11 studies that discussed barriers to EHR implementation.^{10 17 19 20 22 26 27 31 45 48 49} This review revealed that key barriers exist across three phases of implementation: development, deployment and data evaluation.

Barriers to development

Our review identified system and software barriers to successful EHR development in settings focused on refugee populations. The rate-limiting-step for system development of EHR systems was the burden of required resources including money, personnel and training. Participating programmes needed a large budget for computers, software, education materials and training, particularly in the startup stage.^{17 45} The technological barriers to EHR deployment, which required on-demand expert technical support, were also particularly salient at the implementation stages of the new information system.^{17 45} These issues ranged from infrastructure to software problems including: internet connectivity, software bugs or crashes, integration with other facility systems and required software updates due to unplanned data collection requirements.^{10 17 27 45} Successfully addressing these barriers required organisational level support, including staff dedicated to implementation.^{17 46} Operation staff also required advanced training in software design and data analysis.⁴⁵

The main software issues included patient literacy and language translation. To utilise EHRs, many patients required language translation by multilingual clinicians or professional interpreters.^{10 17 31 49} Storck *et al*'s 2018 study described language translation as 'one of the most difficult and time-consuming' aspects of EHR use.³¹ Moreover, facilities serving Chinese or Arabic refugees required systems that supported character encoding for Chinese or Arabic speaking scripts and faced the added complication of using right-to-left writing languages in applications designed for languages that write left-to-right.³¹

Barriers to deployment

Inherent challenges in caring for refugee populations also contributed to difficulties in deploying EHR systems. These challenges included substantial loss to follow-up^{17 22} and provider burnout leading to poor uptake of EHRs.^{10 17 19 20 22 48} Lack of patient follow-up was a significant challenge for facilities implementing EHR in refugee communities, as refugee patients had shorter follow-up time periods than immigrants and controls, perhaps in part due to residential instability.^{17 21 22 27} Incomplete follow-up was often caused by expired or changed phone numbers.¹⁷ In many cases, however, the reason for lack of patient follow-up was unknown, and requires more research.^{22 23}

Poor provider uptake presented significant difficulties in implementing and developing mobile health interventions.^{10 17 19 20 22 48} Low uptake was most frequently attributed to provider attitudes towards the use of a new technology, citing redundant reporting and technological difficulties.^{17 23 45} Additionally, providers expressed frustration towards increased time demands when using a new EHR with a high volume of complex patients.^{10 17 23 45} While negative provider perception was a barrier to EHR uptake, some studies also documented a more nuanced perception of mobile health record implementation.

EHRs were regarded as more beneficial in health-care facilities previously lacking electronic records. In such settings, providers noted that the EHRs facilitated improved patient education and satisfaction.¹⁰

Barriers to data evaluation

Effective evaluation of data is key to attaining the full advantage of EHRs. Barriers to analysing EHR data included incomplete data entry^{20–23} and problems with the time-frames for patient integration and evaluation.^{10 17 19 46} The multifaceted challenges of EHR implementation impeded baseline data recording in several studies.^{20–23} In early stages, providers and staff struggled to consistently implement EHR systems and appropriately record data, resulting in compromised baseline recordings that limited the interpretation of data.^{20–23} It was found that in asylum-seeking host countries, many studies were unable to extract socioeconomic variables, preventing rigorous analysis of EHR implementation and population-level clinical trends.^{32 34} Previous studies on EHRs often noted that short evaluation periods failed to allow patients enough time for follow-up.^{10 17 23} Studies also reported issues evaluating the overall chronicity of events, due to EHRs that did not separate laboratory data across different patient visits.¹⁷ Moreover, cumulative outcome reports were limited in studies with wide time ranges for patient integration and monitoring.^{15 21}

Facilitators of EHR implementation in displaced populations

In total, nine studies discussed facilitators of successful EHR implementation. The most common facilitators were data accuracy, adaptability and ability to interlink with systems management.^{4 10 19 21 22 31 40 45 50} EHRs were noted to improve both efficiency and accuracy of analysing data compared with paper records. Storck *et al* discussed how an EHR approach reduced errors when transferring data from pen and paper questionnaires, especially when multiple languages were being used.³¹ Additionally, reviewing paper records was time-consuming and took staff away from patients.¹⁹

EHRs were noted to be adaptable to different clinical settings and improve provider satisfaction in the long run.¹⁹ Adapting an EHR for a clinical setting does take considerable time and resources. An example of adaptability was the in-house EHR designed for a health facility in Jordan.⁵⁰ While adapting an EHR led to a unique EHR designed specifically for its providers and clinical setting, it also requires a considerable amount of time and energy to create. The advantage of adapting an EHR is that healthcare providers were a part of the design process, and were satisfied with the final product. Others noted that customisation of the apps for specific settings will optimise EHR design and increase uptake.¹⁰ Specifically, consulting with providers ahead of time before implementation is likely to achieve the best design and uptake outcomes.¹⁷

Interlinking with other clinic management systems facilitated improved uptake and overall success of EHRs. EHRs helped increase the accuracy and efficiency of data collection,

which led to improved tracking and forecasting and ultimately strategic planning and cost reduction.^{4 17 22 50} Khader *et al* noted how this integration then allowed for improved 'public health services planning and management, such as rational forecasting for drugs and other consumables and all the logistics necessary for providing quality care such as blood pressure machines, treatment cards, etc.'¹⁹ Integrating EHRs with associated analysis led to cost reductions.^{22 40 45 50} As refugee camps are often underfunded in low-resource settings, the reduction in cost and resource waste has the potential for far-reaching impacts.

DISCUSSION

This systematic review examined the literature to assess the impact of EHRs on chronic disease outcomes for displaced populations. It also evaluated the associated barriers and facilitators of implementing EHRs in refugee settings. Our analysis revealed that EHRs improved chronic disease outcomes such as diabetes and hypertension in refugee camp-based clinics. This was achieved through increased provider adherence to guidelines or treatment algorithms, monitoring of clinical indicators such as disease metrics, patient counselling and patient adherence through integrated messaging services.^{4 10 17 19 20 22 25} Results from asylum countries also showed that EHRs helped to develop focused screening guidelines and increase adherence to those guidelines.^{27–45} This in turn can lead to a reduction in health disparities between asylum seeking patients and the general population.^{27–45} This review identified a number of barriers to successful implementation of EHRs across development, deployment and data analysis.^{10 17 19 20 22 26 27 31 45 48 49} This review also found improved usability in EHR systems that were easily adaptable or able to interlink with systems management.^{4 10 19 21 22 26 31 40 45 50}

We found numerous barriers to EHR implementation, which are expected, given the technical complexities of EHR systems. These include software design, maintenance and internet connectivity. Substantial start-up costs may also hinder implementation. As EHRs become prevalent in low-resource settings such as refugee clinics, it is imperative that EHR design accounts for the unique constraints in these settings and is user-centred.⁵¹ Considering how provider attitude was a key barrier to EHR uptake, engaging providers in development of EHRs is likely to increase their overall interest and eventual uptake of the EHR system.^{10 17 19 20 22 48 52} This concept is also supported by rich bodies of research around community engagement and user-centred design.⁵¹ Future projects may benefit by incorporating reciprocal and respectful community engagement practices in designing and implementing their interventions.^{53–55} Future projects should use key principles such as collaboration, shared purpose and transparency of community engagement in designing their interventions.

A major finding from this review was that EHRs have a positive impact on chronic disease outcomes.^{10 17 19 21 22 46 47}

Notably, this finding is in contention with literature that questions the effectiveness of EHRs in improving outcomes in higher resource settings.^{56 57} Therefore, it is important to understand what elements of EHRs contribute to the observed improvements in chronic disease outcomes in refugee settings compared with higher resource settings. Studies in this review proposed a number of plausible hypotheses such as more frequent provider history taking, counselling and adherence to treatment guidelines.^{15 17 18} Other plausible explanations include increased patient satisfaction and improved adherence through messaging services.^{21 22} Important confounding factors to consider include increased scrutiny on clinical practice during implementation or an influx of resources associated with EHR implementation. While these confounders cannot be ruled out, strong evidence across locations suggests that the observed improvements are due to the EHRs.^{10 17 19 21 22 46 47}

Limitations

This review was limited by the narrow field of work it describes. After removing duplicate records, there were only 225 studies left to screen. There was also significant heterogeneity in the types of data collected by studies and therefore what could be extracted. By capturing a wide range of experiences, we included studies with diverse interventions and outcomes. Additionally, studies included were limited by short follow-up periods, impacting the quality of data presented. Additionally, very few papers discussed technical factors in deploying their EHRs such as hardware used to operate the EHR. In the future, there needs to be further research on designing EHRs for these specific settings and conducting effectiveness trials to identify how EHRs can truly improve health outcomes for refugee populations.

Conclusion

Given the number of displaced persons worldwide doubling in the last decade, and with this trend forecasted to continue, solutions to manage this vulnerable population's health are urgently needed.^{1 2} The findings in this review suggest that, when meticulously implemented, EHRs can improve chronic disease outcomes and enhance healthcare systems in refugee settings. As organisations set out to use EHRs, their barriers to implementation outlined here should be considered and addressed. Additionally, using human-centred design principles and community engagement practices are likely to create successful, sustainable and context-based solutions.⁵¹ By acting now to create adaptable EHR solutions, health systems can be strengthened, providers can be better supported and the health of refugees can be improved.

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Acknowledgements The authors would like to acknowledge Mayo Clinic Library for the review services provided by Larry Prokop in running the search query across databases and FA for providing the online study screening and data extraction platform and importing the citations into it.

Contributors EN developed the protocol for this scoping review, with input from FA and LJP. AZ, LH, MC, EN, SE, FA, JL and SM conducted article screening. AB, HCA and FLE extracted data from the included articles with guidance from FA, HA and SD. AB and HCA synthesised the data and created summary tables. FA supervised the methodological aspect of the work. AB, FLE and HCA wrote the initial draft of the manuscript. HCA was the guarantor for this work. All authors reviewed and critically revised the manuscript before submission.

Funding The authors have not declared a specific grant for this research from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Competing interests Authors AB, FLE, HCA, EN and SE work for a 501c3 non-profit organisation, Hikma Health, that develops electronic health record for displaced populations. We wish to confirm that there has been no financial support for this work that could have influenced its outcome. We confirm that this body of work has not been published elsewhere, nor is it currently under consideration for publication elsewhere.

Patient and public involvement Patients and/or the public were not involved in the design, or conduct, or reporting or dissemination plans of this research.

Patient consent for publication Not required.

Provenance and peer review Not commissioned; externally peer reviewed.

Data availability statement Data are available upon reasonable request. Data can be attained by emailing hcashwor@gmail.com.

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PRISMA Checklist

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist item	Location where item is reported
TITLE			
Title	1	Identify the report as a systematic review.	Pg 1
ABSTRACT			
Abstract	2	See the PRISMA 2020 for Abstracts checklist.	Pg 2
INTRODUCTION			
Rationale	3	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of existing knowledge.	Pg 4 (2 nd paragraph of Intro)
Objectives	4	Provide an explicit statement of the objective(s) or question(s) the review addresses.	Pg 4 (last paragraph of intro)
METHODS			
Eligibility criteria	5	Specify the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the review and how studies were grouped for the syntheses.	Pg 5 (selection of studies)
Information sources	6	Specify all databases, registers, websites, organisations, reference lists and other sources searched or consulted to identify studies. Specify the date when each source was last searched or consulted.	Pg 4 (search strategy) + Appendix 2
Search strategy	7	Present the full search strategies for all databases, registers and websites, including any filters and limits used.	
Selection process	8	Specify the methods used to decide whether a study met the inclusion criteria of the review, including how many reviewers screened each record and each report retrieved, whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	Pg 5 (selection of studies)
Data collection process	9	Specify the methods used to collect data from reports, including how many reviewers collected data from each report, whether they worked independently, any processes for obtaining or confirming data from study investigators, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	Pg 5 (data extraction)
Data items	10a	List and define all outcomes for which data were sought. Specify whether all results that were compatible with each outcome domain in each study were sought (e.g. for all measures, time points, analyses), and if not, the methods used to decide which results to collect.	Pg 5 (data extraction)
	10b	List and define all other variables for which data were sought (e.g. participant and intervention characteristics, funding sources). Describe any assumptions made about any missing or unclear information.	Pg 5 (data extraction)
Study risk of bias assessment	11	Specify the methods used to assess risk of bias in the included studies, including details of the tool(s) used, how many reviewers assessed each study and whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	Pg 5 (critical appraisal)
Effect measures	12	Specify for each outcome the effect measure(s) (e.g. risk ratio, mean difference) used in the synthesis or presentation of results.	N/A
Synthesis methods	13a	Describe the processes used to decide which studies were eligible for each synthesis (e.g. tabulating the study intervention characteristics and comparing against the planned groups for each synthesis (item #5)).	Pg 5 (data synthesis)

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist item	Location where item is reported
	13b	Describe any methods required to prepare the data for presentation or synthesis, such as handling of missing summary statistics, or data conversions.	N/A
	13c	Describe any methods used to tabulate or visually display results of individual studies and syntheses.	N/A
	13d	Describe any methods used to synthesize results and provide a rationale for the choice(s). If meta-analysis was performed, describe the model(s), method(s) to identify the presence and extent of statistical heterogeneity, and software package(s) used.	Pg 5 (synthesis of results)
	13e	Describe any methods used to explore possible causes of heterogeneity among study results (e.g. subgroup analysis, meta-regression).	N/A
	13f	Describe any sensitivity analyses conducted to assess robustness of the synthesized results.	N/A
Reporting bias assessment	14	Describe any methods used to assess risk of bias due to missing results in a synthesis (arising from reporting biases).	N/A
Certainty assessment	15	Describe any methods used to assess certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for an outcome.	N/A
RESULTS			
Study selection	16a	Describe the results of the search and selection process, from the number of records identified in the search to the number of studies included in the review, ideally using a flow diagram.	Pg 5 (description of included studies)
	16b	Cite studies that might appear to meet the inclusion criteria, but which were excluded, and explain why they were excluded.	N/A
Study characteristics	17	Cite each included study and present its characteristics.	Pgs 6-8 (Table 1)
Risk of bias in studies	18	Present assessments of risk of bias for each included study.	Appendix 3
Results of individual studies	19	For all outcomes, present, for each study: (a) summary statistics for each group (where appropriate) and (b) an effect estimate and its precision (e.g. confidence/credible interval), ideally using structured tables or plots.	N/A
Results of syntheses	20a	For each synthesis, briefly summarise the characteristics and risk of bias among contributing studies.	N/A
	20b	Present results of all statistical syntheses conducted. If meta-analysis was done, present for each the summary estimate and its precision (e.g. confidence/credible interval) and measures of statistical heterogeneity. If comparing groups, describe the direction of the effect.	N/A
	20c	Present results of all investigations of possible causes of heterogeneity among study results.	N/A
	20d	Present results of all sensitivity analyses conducted to assess the robustness of the synthesized results.	N/A
Reporting biases	21	Present assessments of risk of bias due to missing results (arising from reporting biases) for each synthesis assessed.	N/A
Certainty of evidence	22	Present assessments of certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for each outcome assessed.	N/A
DISCUSSION			
Discussion	23a	Provide a general interpretation of the results in the context of	Pgs 12-13

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist item	Location where item is reported
		other evidence.	(discussion)
	23b	Discuss any limitations of the evidence included in the review.	Pg 13 (limitations)
	23c	Discuss any limitations of the review processes used.	Pg 13 (limitations)
	23d	Discuss implications of the results for practice, policy, and future research.	Pgs 12-13 (discussion & conclusion)
OTHER INFORMATION			
Registration and protocol	24a	Provide registration information for the review, including register name and registration number, or state that the review was not registered.	N/A
	24b	Indicate where the review protocol can be accessed, or state that a protocol was not prepared.	N/A
	24c	Describe and explain any amendments to information provided at registration or in the protocol.	N/A
Support	25	Describe sources of financial or non-financial support for the review, and the role of the funders or sponsors in the review.	Pg 14
Competing interests	26	Declare any competing interests of review authors.	Pg 14
Availability of data, code and other materials	27	Report which of the following are publicly available and where they can be found: template data collection forms; data extracted from included studies; data used for all analyses; analytic code; any other materials used in the review.	N/A

From: Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, et al. The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ* 2021;372:n71. doi: 10.1136/bmj.n71

For more information, visit: <http://www.prisma-statement.org/>

Appendix 2: Search Strategy

Ovid

Database(s): APA PsycInfo 1806 to April Week 1 2021, EBM Reviews - Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials March 2021, EBM Reviews - Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2005 to April 8, 2021, EBM Reviews - Health Technology Assessment 4th Quarter 2016, Embase 1974 to 2021 April 09, Ovid MEDLINE(R) and Epub Ahead of Print, In-Process, In-Data-Review & Other Non-Indexed Citations and Daily 1946 to April 09, 2021

Search Strategy:

#	Searches	Results
1	exp Refugees/	32123
2	((asylum adj3 seek*) or "displaced people" or "displaced person*" or refugee* or "stateless people" or "stateless person*").ti,ab,hw,kw.	45095
3	1 or 2	45095
4	exp Electronic Health Records/	46211
5	exp Medical Records Systems, Computerized/ (((("Computer-based" or computerized or "Computer-stored" or Electronic) adj2 ("Medical Record" or "Medical Records" or "Patient Record" or "Patient Records" or "Health Record" or "Health Records" or "Order Entry" or "Order Entries")) or ehealth	44939
6	or "E-Health" or EHR or "electronic health" or EMR or "health information exchange*" or "medical information exchange*" or mhealth or "M-Health" or "Mobile health" or "Physician Order Entries" or "Physician Order Entry").ti,ab,hw,kw.	238166
7	4 or 5 or 6	239595
8	3 and 7	271
9	remove duplicates from 8	187

Scopus

- 1 TITLE-ABS-KEY((asylum W/3 seek*) OR "displaced people" OR "displaced person*" OR refugee* OR "stateless people" OR "stateless person*")
- 2 TITLE-ABS-KEY(("Computer-based" or computerized or "Computer-stored" or Electronic) W/2 ("Medical Record" or "Medical Records" or "Patient Record" or "Patient Records" or "Health Record" or "Health Records" or "Order Entry" or "Order Entries")) OR ehealth OR "E-Health" OR EHR OR "electronic health" OR EMR OR "health information exchange*" OR "medical information exchange*" OR mhealth OR "M-Health" OR "Mobile health" OR "Physician Order Entries" OR "Physician Order Entry")
- 3 1 and 2
- 4 INDEX(embase) OR INDEX(medline) OR PMID(0* OR 1* OR 2* OR 3* OR 4* OR 5* OR 6* OR 7* OR 8* OR 9*)
- 5 3 and not 4

CINAHL

- 1 (MM "Refugee Camps") OR (MM "Refugees")
- 2 ((asylum N3 seek*) or "displaced people" or "displaced person*" or refugee* or
"stateless people" or "stateless person*")
- 3 1 or 2
- 4 (MH "Electronic Health Records+")
- 5 (((("Computer-based" or computerized or "Computer-stored" or Electronic) N2
("Medical Record" or "Medical Records" or "Patient Record" or "Patient Records" or
"Health Record" or "Health Records" or "Order Entry" or "Order Entries")) or ehealth
or "E-Health" or EHR or "electronic health" or EMR or "health information
exchange*" or "medical information exchange*" or mhealth or "M-Health" or
"Mobile health" or "Physician Order Entries" or "Physician Order Entry")
- 6 4 or 5
- 7 3 and 6

Appendix 3 – Critical Appraisal

Modified Newcastle-Ottawa tool for Cohort and Case Control Studies

1. Risk of bias due to loss to follow-up? (drop outs, withdrawals and patients who lack follow-up data)
2. Was there any reporting bias due to selective outcome reporting?
3. Important imbalances at baseline (in terms of the two comparative groups of patients)?
4. Source of study funding
5. The study subjects were recruited in a consecutive manner and are representative of the whole experience of the study center?
6. Study ascertained what medical conditions patients had from a reliable and credible source (such as medical records, or the study followed patients to see what medical conditions they had) versus from a less reliable source (ICD-9 codes for example).
7. Comparability of cohorts on the basis of the design or analysis, if applicable (Were there methods described to control for confounding? (e.g. appropriate study design and/or statistical methods described which would attempt to control for confounding—such as matching or logistic regression))
8. Assessment of outcome (were the methods used to assess for the presence of the outcomes credible and reliable?)
9. Was study follow up long enough for outcomes to occur?
10. Adequacy of follow up of cohorts (was there significant loss to follow-up?)
11. Authors' conflict of interest and funding sources?
12. Is the qualitative methodology appropriate?
13. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of this study?
14. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?
15. Has the relationship between the researchers and participants been adequately considered?
16. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?
17. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?

Study ID (author, year)	Follow up	Outcome reporting	Baseline imbalances	Source of study funding	Study subjects	Exposure ascertain ment	Compar ability	Outcome assessment	Follow up time	Adequate follow up	Conflict of interest	Qualitative methods	Recruit ment strategy	Data collection	Researcher relationship	Ethical issues	Data analysis
Doocy, <i>et al</i> 2017	Yes, but response rate was enough to detect change	Yes	No	Research for Health in Humanitarian Crisis (R2HC).	Unclear	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unclear	Yes	Yes
Berkowitz <i>et al</i> , 2016	Yes. Refugees had shorter follow up.	No	Yes. Difference in baseline BMI, baseline diabetes, difference in education, difference in insurance	Unknown	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No conflict	N/A	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Khader, <i>et al</i> 2013	Yes, large loss to follow up (males significantly more than females)	No	Yes, differences in male and female participants (almost across the board)	Unknown	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No conflict	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Khader, Ballout <i>et al</i> 2014	10% lost to follow up after 1 year	No	Yes, more males, more under 60yo, more patients with	Unknown	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No conflict	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

			diabetes control undetermined, more patients with poor diabetes control who failed to return to clinic														
<i>Khader, Ballout et al 2014</i>	Yes. About 30% over 36 months lost to follow up	No	N/A	Unknown	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unknown	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No. They did not have comparison group
<i>Khader et al., 2012</i>	No	No	N/A	Unknown	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	No	Unknown	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No. They did not have comparison group
<i>Khader et al., 2012</i>	No	No	N/A	Unknown	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	No	Unknown	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No. They did not have comparison group
<i>Doocy et al, 2017</i>	Yes, 77.75% of participants finished study	No	N/A (longitudinal cohort)	Research for Health in Humanitarian Crisis (R2HC).	No, excluded those without HT or DM diagnosis or under 40	Yes	N/A	No (self-reported adherence)	Yes	77.75% completed study	No conflict	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No. They did not have comparison group
<i>Doocy et al., 2018</i>	Yes, 78% of participants finished study	No	N/A (longitudinal cohort)	Research for Health in Humanitarian Crisis (R2HC)	No, excluded those without HT or DM diagnosis or under 40	Yes	N/A	No (self-reported adherence)	Yes	78% completed study	No conflict	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No. They did not have a comparison group
<i>Shapiro, 2016</i>	Yes, 33 of 129 (25.6%) excluded due to no follow-up	No	No	Unknown	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	No conflict	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No. They did not have comparison group
<i>Skoberg, 2019</i>	TBD	TBD	TBD	EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, grant number SMDno-2016-1541.	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	TBD	TBD	No conflict	Yes	Yes	TBD	Yes	Yes	No. They did not have comparison group
<i>Storck 2018</i>	TBD	TBD	TBD	Unknown	Unclear	No	N/A	N/A	TBD	TBD	No conflict	N/A	N/A	TBD	Yes	Yes	No. They did not have comparison group
<i>Njeru et al., 2017</i>	Yes, unknown	No	Yes, more females,	Mayo Clinic	Yes	Yes	No controls	Yes	Yes	Unknown	No conflict	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

	number excluded for lack of visits		younger, non-white	Kern Center and Primary Care Division													
<i>Olson et al., 2017</i>	No	No	No	Unknown	Yes	Yes	Yes, controlled for age, sex, region, duration of US residence	Yes	Yes	No	Unknown	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Pohl et al., 2017</i>	No	No	N/A	Unknown	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	No conflict	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No. They did not have comparison on group
<i>Wagner, 2014</i>	No	No	N/A		Yes	Yes	Yes (controlled for age)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No conflict	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No. They did not have comparison on group
<i>Waldof, 2014</i>	No	No	N/A	Unknown	No, excluded all Spanish speaking patients and those without EMR	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No conflict	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No, they did not have a comparison on group
<i>Walters, 2016</i>	No	No	N/A	Unknown	No, some patients may have known about their HBV status	Yes	N/A	No, used HBsAg which only indicates chronic infection	Yes	No	No conflict	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Goodman, 2018</i>	No	No	N/A	Unknown	No	No	Yes	N/A	N/A	No	No conflict	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Goosen, 2015</i>	No	No	asylum seekers are more often younger males	Unknown	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	No conflict	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Hanna, 2015</i>	No	No	N/A	Unknown	Yes	Yes	No, didn't control for age/gender	N/A	Yes	No	No conflict	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (no comparison but cross-sectional)
<i>Higgins, 2019</i>	No	No	N/A	Unknown	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	No	No conflict	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Lagos-Gallego, 2017</i>	No	No	No	Universidade Tecnológica de Pereira	Yes	No, used ICD-10 codes	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	No conflict	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Darwish, 2020</i>	No	No	N/A	Unknown	Yes	No, used diagnostic codes	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	No conflict	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No. They did not have a comparison on group
<i>Oltrogge, 2020</i>	Yes	No	N/A	N/A	Yes	No, used diagnostic codes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	No conflict	Yes, based on free-text EMR entries	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Dalheez, 2020</i>	N/A	No	N/A	Unknown	Yes (random)	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	Unknown	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No. They did not

				sampling with 82% response rate)													have a comparis on group
Sengoren Dikis, 2020	N/A	No	Yes, Turkish citizens versus Syrian refugees, smaller sample size of refugees	Unknown	Yes	No, used diagnostic codes	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	No conflict	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hoffman, 2021	Yes	No	N/A	University of Minnesota, NIH Child Health & Human Developm ent	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	No conflict	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Cochrane Tool for risk of bias assessment of randomized clinical trials

Study	Is the case definition adequate?	Representativeness of the cases	Selection of Controls	Definition of Controls	Total	Comparability of cases and controls on the basis of the design or analysis	Ascertainment of exposure	Same method of ascertainment for cases and controls	Non-Response rate	Total	Total
Saleh, 2018	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	Disease and Populatoin	Records and Surveys	Yes	Low response rate (62.9%) to phone screenings	3	7

Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Critical Appraisal for Qualitative Studies

Study	Questions									
	1. Is there congruity between the stated philosophical perspective and the research methodology?	2. Is there congruity between the research methodology and the research question or objectives?	3. Is there congruity between the research methodology and the methods used to collect data?	4. Is there congruity between the research methodology and the representation and analysis of data?	5. Is there congruity between the research methodology and the interpretation of results?	6. Is there a statement locating the researcher culturally or theoretically?	7. Is the influence of the researcher on the research, and vice- versa, addressed?	8. Are participants, and their voices, adequately represented?	9. Is the research ethical according to current criteria or, for recent studies, and is there evidence of ethical approval by an appropriate body?	Were strategies to address incomplete follow up utilized?
Rossi et al., 2009	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Santoro et al., 2016	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Maher et al., (2012)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No