



YOUNG PEOPLE'S ALCOHOL USE AROUND WATER: A SCOPING REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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BACKGROUND

- Alcohol is a major risk factor for fatal and non-fatal drowning. Young people (aged 16-24) in particular are at an increased risk of both drowning and the use of alcohol in and around water settings.¹
- Risk-taking in the context of alcohol use around water is influenced by the wider social and commercial context. Accordingly, recent literature has described the concept of 'aquatic alcogenic environments', whereby alcohol use around water is normalised through various elements including alcohol advertising and promotion, social influences, and peer behaviours.²
- The aim of this scoping review was to summarise the literature on young people's alcohol use in aquatic environments and the associated social and health risks, in order to inform future policy and advocacy efforts.

METHODS

Scopus, PubMed, Web of Science, SportDISCUS and CINAHL Ultimate were searched for English-language, peer-reviewed studies conducted in high-income countries and published since 2008.

Search Strategy

POPULATION: Young people aged between 15 and 34 years

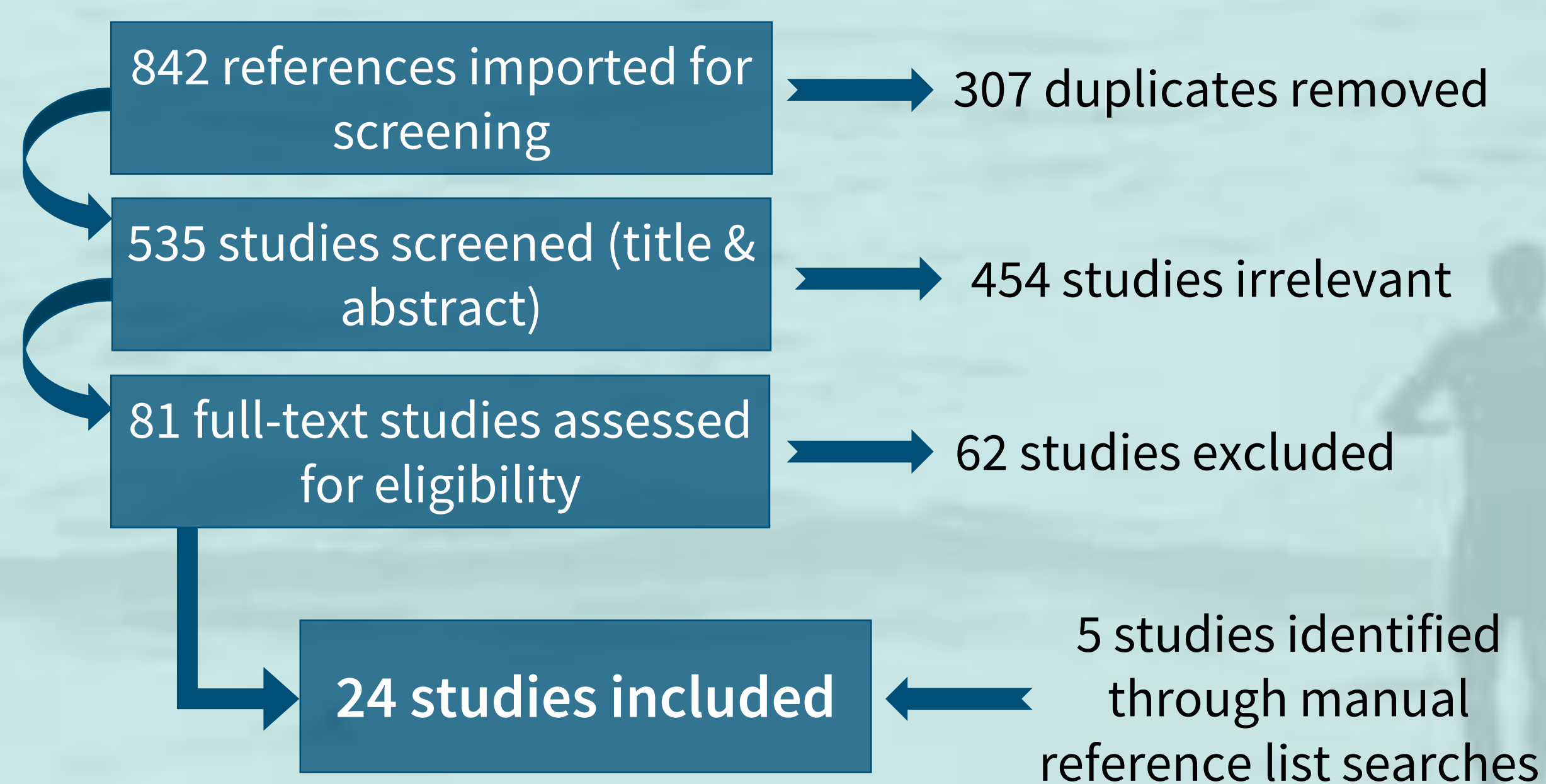
EXPOSURE: Alcohol use in or around recreational aquatic environments

OUTCOME: Unintentional fatal or non-fatal drowning

Study Selection and Data Extraction

- Title and abstract were screened by one reviewer, with 10% checked by second reviewer
- Full-text of studies screened by two reviewers, with conflicts resolved by discussion
- All included studies were appraised for study quality using a checklist adapted from the MetaQAT framework³
- Data were extracted by one author, with 20% checked by a second author
- Results were summarised using narrative synthesis and organised into themes

RESULTS



Prevalence and risk factors of alcohol use by young people in aquatic environments (n=13)

- Alcohol use around water **common behaviour** in young adults (reported by 25%-61%) – considered '**typical**' by young adults in regional Victoria⁴
- Most common among **males**, on **public holidays** and among those living in **regional areas**
- Risk perception** important determinant of behaviour: more concerned about risks = less likely to drink and swim
- Peer influence** important: believing peers would approve = higher intention to drink and swim

Epidemiology of alcohol-related unintentional drownings in young adults (n=9)

- Risk of unintentional drowning **increased** with alcohol use
- Rates of alcohol involvement **substantially higher in river** (25%-50%) than coastal (8%-13%) drowning deaths in Australia
- Presence of alcohol among drowning victims more common in **males** compared to females

Interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm in aquatic environments (n=3)

- Three studies:
 - One evaluated video intervention with some encouraging findings
 - One evaluated awareness of current prevention campaigns
 - One identified social marketing campaigns in literature but found no evidence of evaluation or effectiveness

CONCLUSIONS

- Young people, particularly males, commonly use alcohol in and around water – while they are aware of the risks, this awareness does not always translate into behaviour to reduce risks
- Use of alcohol around water is influenced by wider environment, including social norms, peer influence, and commercial determinants such as alcohol marketing – i.e., the 'aquatic alcogenic environment'
- Interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm around water need to be comprehensive and consider environmental influences and supports to minimise the effect of the aquatic alcogenic environment
- These findings will assist in identifying and setting priorities for drowning and aquatic injury prevention, and inform health promotion advocacy and policy

MORE INFO?

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Visit our website: deepwa.org/alcohol-advertising-around-water

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