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# Exploring the concept of resilience in older LGBT+ people: A mixed study systematic review

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# Introduction

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- ❖ Besides similar challenges to heterosexual and cisgender peers in later life, specific health and structural inequalities of LGBT+ older adults have been well established.
- ❖ Inequalities are compounded by the cumulative effects of lifelong exposure to prejudice, discrimination and criminalisation and pose risks linked to minority stress and stress adaptation in later life.
- ❖ Simultaneously, there has been a growing research interest in the role of resilience in LGBT+ individuals, communities and populations.



# Introduction

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- ❖ Research shows that older LGBT+ adults show signs of resilience despite facing multiple socio/economic and structural inequalities that impact the determinants of health and social wellbeing.
- ❖ Despite the growing focus on resilience in later life, no universal definition exists and there are ongoing debates about the ambiguities and methodological limitations of the resilience research itself.
- ❖ Resilience has been described and researched as either a trait or a process and is predominantly understood as a dynamic process of adapting well and bouncing back in times of adversity.

# Aims of the review

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- ❖ The aims of this review were to:
1. Explore how resilience is conceptualised and defined in older LGBT+ research.
  2. Discuss how it is studied (methodology, tools, related concepts).



# Inclusion and exclusion criteria

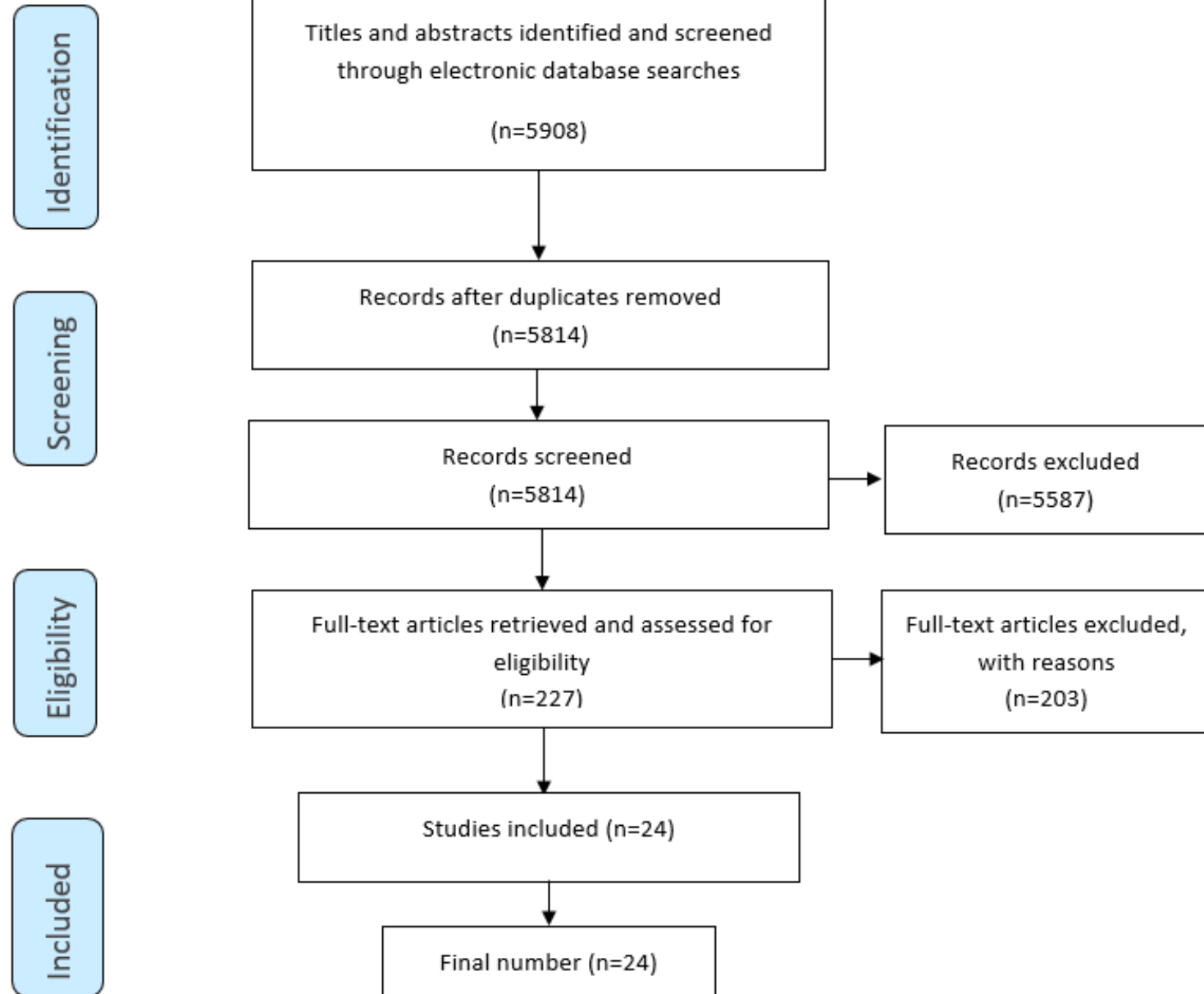
<b>Inclusion criteria</b>	<b>Exclusion criteria</b>
<b>Primary research of qualitative and/or quantitative, and/or mixed methods.</b>	Theoretical articles i.e. papers discussing theoretical aspects of resilience or opinion pieces (e.g. editorials).
<b>Studies including older LGBT+ adults (50+).</b>	Review papers, discussion papers, opinion articles, editorials, theses and case studies (n=1).
<b>Studies where resilience is an outcome.</b>	Studies that include LGBT+ people aged 50+ but where it is not possible to separate data from LGBT younger than 50 years or where the data provided is insufficient to draw firm conclusions regarding resilience of older LGBT+ adults.
<b>Studies with resilience as a primary or secondary focus of the study.</b>	Studies where there is a vague reference to resilience with no clear indication of resilience as a feature of the results/findings.
<b>English language publications.</b>	Publications in language other than English.

Figure1: PRISMA Flow Diagram of Selection Process

# PRISMA Diagram

## ❖ Main reasons for exclusion:

- Couldn't disaggregate data by age
- Conference abstracts, thesis, book chapters
- No mention of resilience
- Not primary research
- Resilience mentioned in discussion/recommendation
- Not 50 age or older
- Couldn't disaggregate data by LGBT+ identity



# Findings

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- ❖ The study designs were equally divided between qualitative and quantitative, using various research approaches and methodologies.
- ❖ Qualitative studies included the use of **grounded theory, narrative methodology, descriptive designs** and **phenomenological approach**.
- ❖ Most quantitative studies were **descriptive, cross-sectional** and **comparative**.
- ❖ While qualitative studies usually did not pose resilience specific questions, some quantitative studies did use resilience scales such as:
  - 10 item **Davidson Resilience Scale** (N=1)
  - 25 item **Wagnild & Young Resilience Scale** (with one paper citing this scale but using a 14-item scale) (N=2)
  - **3 item scale** (Fredriksen-Goldsen & Kim, 2017; Smith et al., 2008) (N=2)



# Findings

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- ❖ Resilience was recognized as both an **entry point** (N=18) and as an **outcome** (N=6).
- ❖ In entry point papers, resilience was theoretically described and conceptualized in different degrees, with some studies using a **resilience conceptual framework** (N=7), providing **literature overview of resilience** (N=9) or simply **mentioning, but not conceptualizing resilience** (N=7).
- ❖ In outcome papers resilience was recognized as **outcome on itself** (N=6), was **included in the discussion by the authors** (N=5), and was **defined/conceptualized** (N=1).



# Findings

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- ❖ More often than not, resilience was not a primary focus of the research (N=8), and the concept often lacked a clear definition, conceptualization and application within the studies.
- ❖ A smaller number of studies described **resilience as a process of adaptation**, while the **majority considered it as a trait** and researched it in relation to other concepts (such as mental health, quality of life, minority stress, etc.). In these studies, resilience was perceived as a strength that supported coping with adversity.
- ❖ Resilience was therefore **demonstrated** by the participants by their use of internal and external protective processes.



# So what to do about resilience in research?

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- ❖ Resilience is a topic of growing interest for researchers and practitioners.
- ❖ Better conceptualization of resilience could help improve methods used to study the concept and lead to more robust findings and effective interventions.
- ❖ Greater clarity on the concept of resilience could also support practitioner training in resilience and the particular experiences of older LGBT+ adults.



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# Thank you for listening!

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