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Defining a Role for Occupational Therapy in the Transition from the Military to Academia: A Scoping Review

Elizabeth Cifuentes, OTS; Steven Gerardi, PhD, OTD, MSS, OTR

BACKGROUND

Education is one of the most important areas of occupations in a person's life (AOTA, 2014). To fully participate in this occupation, it is suggested to have formal educational participation, informal personal educational needs or interest exploration, and informal personal education participation (AOTA, 2014). Showing the importance of mastery of each of these components is the best way to persuade universities that OT practitioners could apply their expertise in this area when working with student veterans, which is currently lacking in available literature.

PROBLEM

There is a paucity of literature on the role of OT for veterans in transition to school, and the literature that is available has not been systematically reviewed. This makes it difficult for OT practitioners to address the needs of veterans in transition from military service to school.

PURPOSE

To conduct a scoping review of the literature to identify the role that OT has in addressing the needs of veterans in their transition from military service to school.

METHODS

5-Step Scoping review methodology (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005)

1. Identify the research question
2. Identify relevant studies
3. Study selection
4. Chart the data
5. Collate, summarize, and report the details

Research Question:

What currently being done to address the transition of veterans from military service to academia and are within the scope of practice of occupational therapy?

Search Terms and Databases:

- military OR veterans OR soldiers OR armed forces AND transition OR reintegration OR adjustment AND college OR university
- CINHAL Complete, APA PsychInfo, MEDLINE, OpenDissertations, and ERIC

Inclusion Criteria:

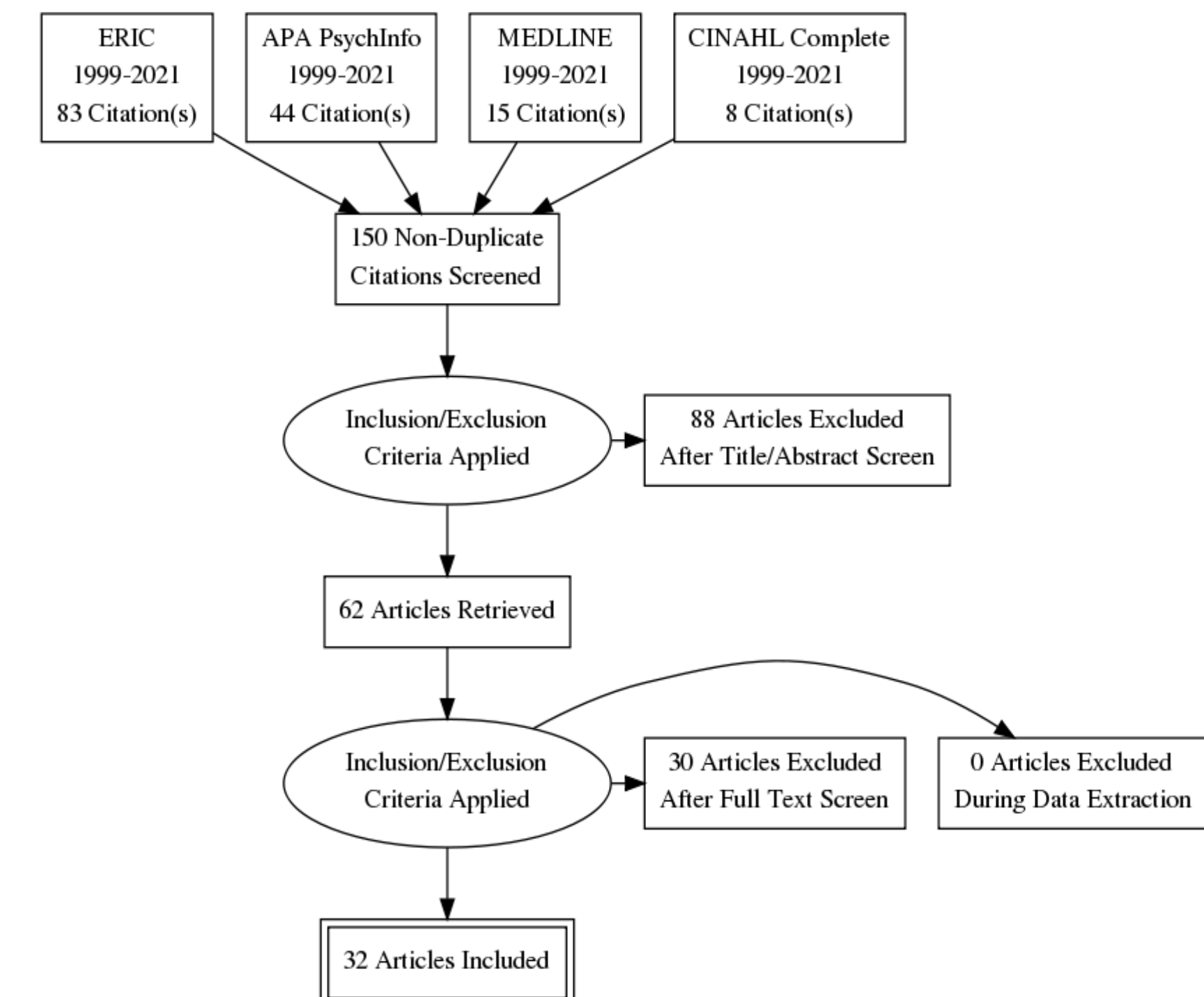
- Must address the transition of service members from military service to academia
- The search was restricted to the abstract

Exclusion Criteria:

- Do not include interventions that address at least one MOHO subsystem of the environment

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RESULTS



The **four main themes** found in the literature search:

1. A veteran resource center or designated office
2. Faculty and staff preparation
3. Staffing schools to optimally support student veterans

The role of OT in veteran transition to the student role:

- Advocate for the needs of veteran students
- Educate staff on challenges and solutions to transition
- Assess challenges to transition to the student role
- Advise on the development of skills, habits and routines that support the student role

REFERENCES:

