

# Interventions on psychosocial difficulties in depressive disorders

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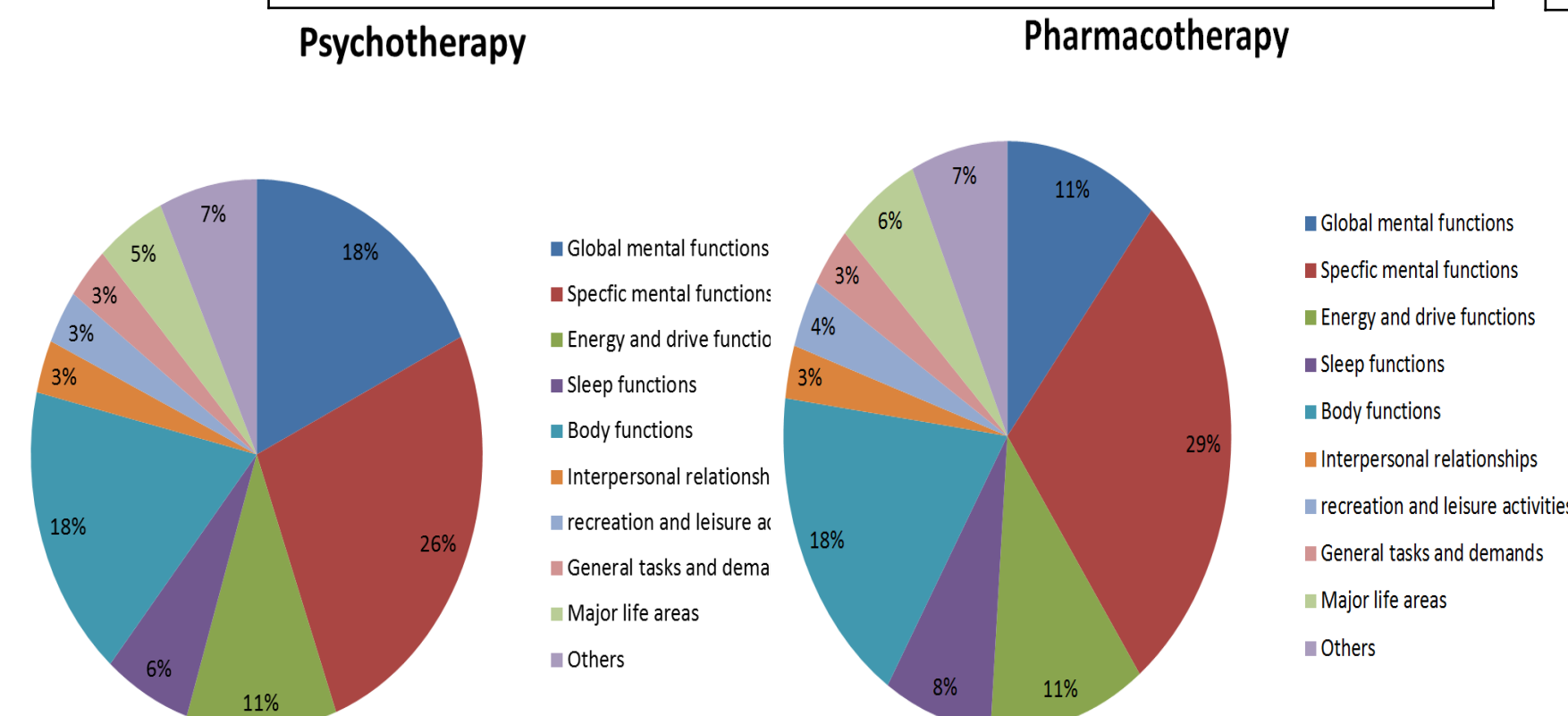
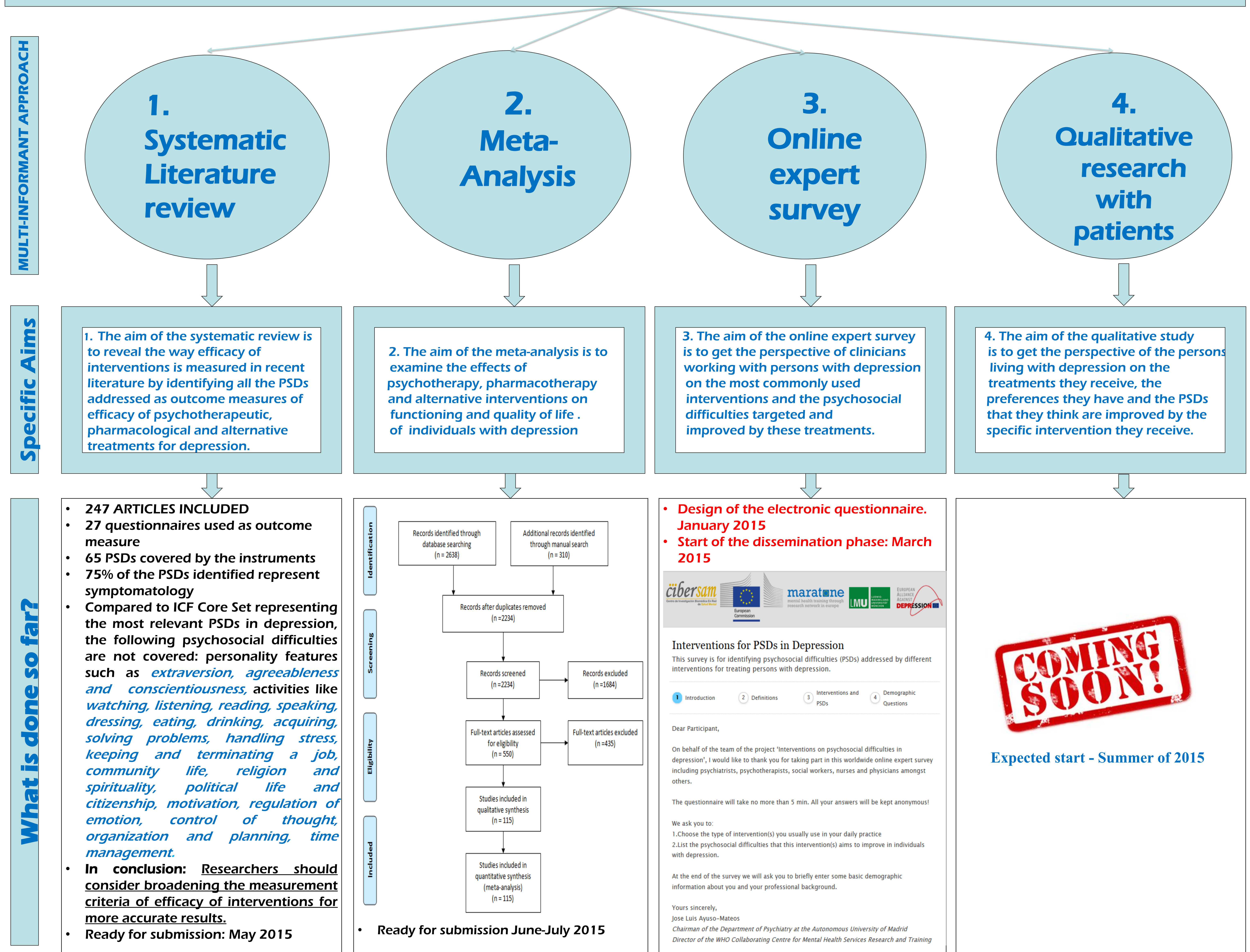
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## BACKGROUND

Depression is a major public health issue due to its high mortality rates, suicide risk, and economic impact on the society [2]. The burden of depression is enormous and affects multiple sides of individual's life. One substantial dimension of depression encompasses the psychosocial difficulties (PSDs) people experience in their everyday life. A recent comprehensive approach provides a new definition of PSDs, based on WHO's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). It states that PSDs are "...impairments of mental functions, activity limitations and participation restrictions that include both the individual's mental capacities and his or her social interactions (such as in work, family life and leisure activities)" [2]. Moreover, impairments of body functions under central nervous system control such as pain and sexual interest problems are also included as PSDs.

There are various methods of managing depression – from basic psychosocial support and antidepressant medication (TCAs, SSRIs) to psychotherapy (e.g. cognitive behavior therapy, interpersonal psychotherapy) and alternative non-conventional therapies, such as yoga, sleep deprivation, etc. Interventional studies so far, however, have focused mainly on symptoms as the main outcome measure of efficacy of the available treatments for depressive disorders. Functional limitations beyond depressive symptoms have been, however, somehow neglected in interventional studies, so that evidence of the efficacy of interventions on them is insufficient [3]. Moreover, patient and expert perspectives on the relevant PSDs covered by the available interventions in depression are scarce. Therefore, identification of all relevant areas for the wide range of interventions is needed for future improving of the measurement process and providing a more comprehensive picture on the interventions' efficacy.

The overall objective of the project is to provide research recommendations for improving the measurement of efficacy of interventions for depressive disorders.



## FINAL PUBLICATION AND RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT

The final objective of the project will be implemented through a final publication, comparing the expert and patient perspective to the findings from literature, thus identifying all relevant PSDs for the addressed interventions on one hand, and the gaps in the efficacy measurement process in research, on other. The main implication of the study is that researchers will have elaborate information, sufficient to change the way they assess efficacy in interventional studies. Many well recognized interventions may appear to be overestimated considering the fact that the evidence on their efficacy has been based only on reduction of symptoms so far and more pressing issues have been unconsidered. Furthermore, the findings will lead to potential changes or inclusion of more instruments for assessment towards more accurate reporting of evidence.

## REFERENCES

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