



Definitions and Roles of Community Health and Peer Navigators: A review of Australian literature

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Background

The diversity of community and peer navigator programs in health and social care in Australia makes it difficult to provide a coherent definition of the roles and responsibilities. It also creates challenges for developing standardised training and a case for sustainable funding, organisational support and integration of community-based programs within the health care system.

Aims

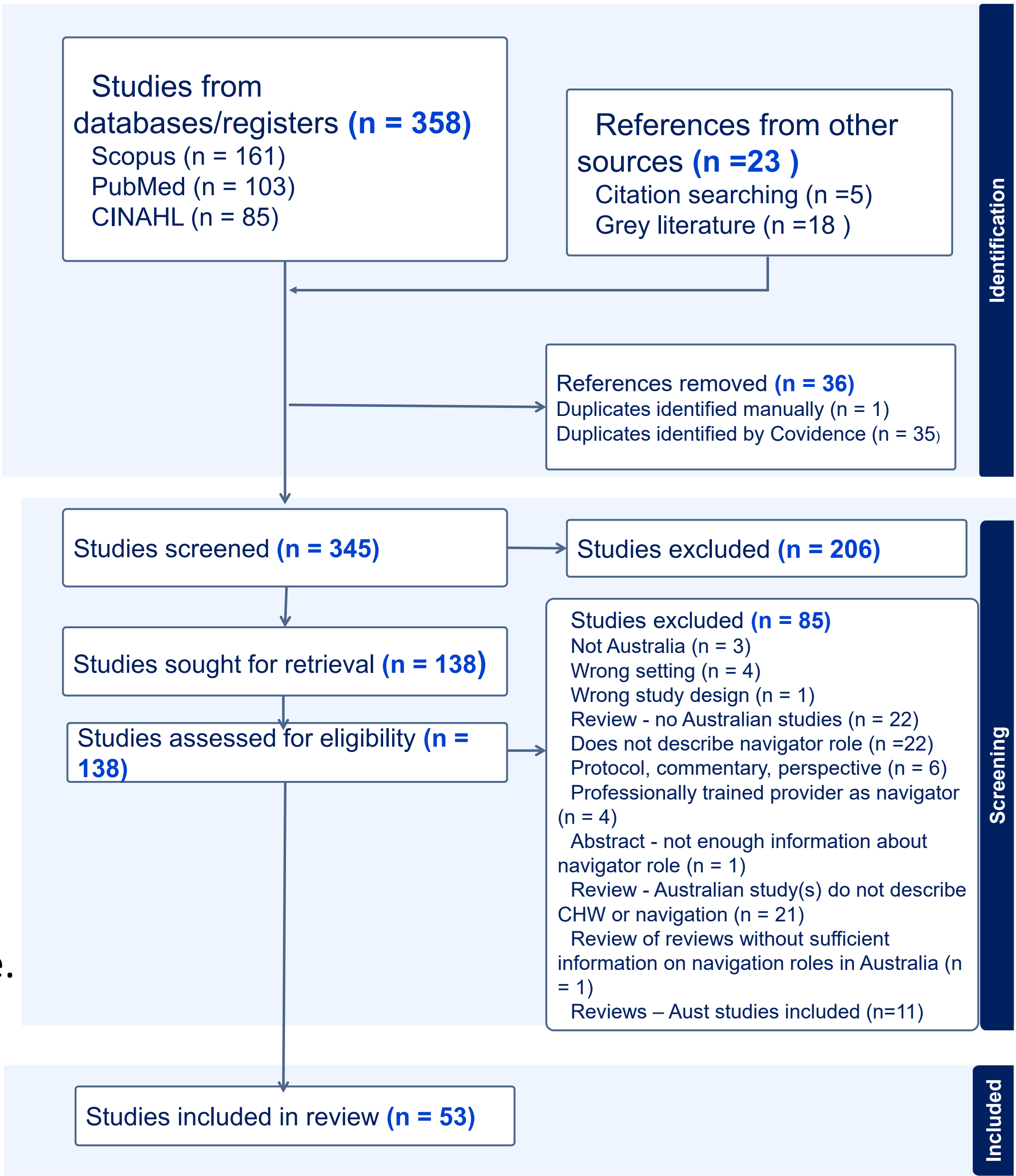
To develop a description of the range of definitions and roles of CHNs – that identifies core or areas of overlap in diverse programs and areas for adaptation to context.

Method

Sources: Databases: Pubmed, CINAHL, Scopus. Published documents and websites.

Search terms:

- 1. Australia;
 - 2. Title: Community health worker; health navigator; Peer worker; lay health worker; Aboriginal health worker; Pacific Island health worker; Torres straits health worker; link worker; peer navigator, community health navigator’ ‘bilingual community navigator’ ‘multicultural health navigator, peer navigator, peer educator.
 - 3. Role: navigation, care coordination, linkage, care finding, finding services, connecting
- Inclusion**
Time: Published from 2010 to 2026
Setting: health, social care or community organisations
Type of worker: lay or peer worker; paid or unpaid
Study: Evaluation (quant or qual), descriptive study or report which describes roles or scope of practice.
- Exclusion:**
Type of worker: Professional healthcare clinician
Study: Opinion, non systematic literature review



Findings: Results included 53 studies. Initial synthesis:

- Elements of definitions describe CHN characteristics
- Key navigation roles include: 1.Improving access; 2.Education and self management; 3. Care Coordination

What do you think?

Roles of a CHN: Access

Put a coloured dot next to your priority

Your vote

Assess	Assess unmet needs: health services Assess unmet needs: social & community care Assess and help address information needs Assess current use or adherence to care Assess individual barriers to timely access Assess service barriers to timely access Assess system barriers to timely access Identify support networks	
Information	Review current information (eg discharge plan Help person to set goals/ shared decision making Prompt to access or engage with services	
Plan/act	Plan how to contact services/ make appointments/connect/obtain referrals Prepare for accessing services Plan and act to address individual barriers Plan and act to address service/system barriers Help to access (eg appointments) Support attendance at appointment Accompany when accessing service/appointments Arrange or provide interpreting/translation Arrange or provide transport Review visit/actions arising Help applications to aged care, NDIS, paperwork Arrange respite Obtain medications or other resources Support transitions (eg hospital to home)	
Advocacy	Follow up, plan intensity of follow up For the individual To make changes to services/coordinate To make changes to system	

What do you think?

Definitions of a CHN

Characteristics of navigators

- Share cultural background with communities they serve
- Share lived experience with communities, population and cultural groups they serve
- Share membership of communities they serve
- Share experience of barriers to care with people they serve
- Non-medical
- Have community connections
- Have knowledge of local services
- Trusted/credible
- Speaks community language(s)

Put a coloured dot next to your priority
Your vote

Next steps

1. Complete analysis of review
2. Disseminate report
3. Ask for your comments
4. Reach consensus on core and variable elements of definitions and roles.