

TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY FOR FETAL ANOMALY: A NARRATIVE SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE HEALTHCARE NEEDS AND EXPERIENCES OF PARENTS

MRS SUZIE HEANEY – DR ÁINE AVENTIN – PROFESSOR MARK TOMLINSON

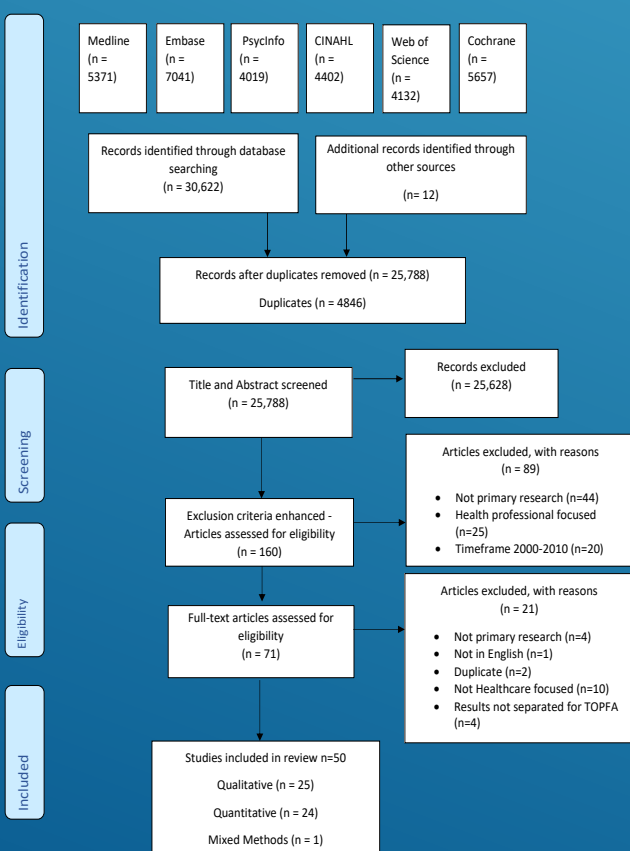
INTRODUCTION

Fetal anomaly diagnosis and perinatal death are associated with long-term psychological and emotional distress for families. This literature review appraises and summarises the research of parents' experiences following a termination of pregnancy for fetal anomaly (TOPFA).

METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods systematic review of studies published between 2010 and April 2020 was undertaken, with comprehensive searches conducted across six databases. Further lateral and manual searches were conducted through examination of reference lists, grey literature, and Government documents.

RESULTS



FINDINGS

Data was synthesised using thematic synthesis (Thomas and Hardy, 2008). Results were initially framed within the six dimensions of health (physical, mental, emotional, environmental, spiritual, social) to provide a holistic interpretation and analysis of individuals' health and healthcare, reflecting the multidimensional and complex nature of the TOPFA experience. An inductive approach to developing themes and concepts was then undertaken.

Proportion of Data Relating to Health Domains



- Social (28%)
- Emotional (27%)
- Physical (17%)
- Mental (16%)
- Spiritual (8%)
- Environmental (4%)

KEY THEMES

- Emotional and physical pain
- Attachment and bonding with baby
- Silence magnifies isolation – 'taboo within the taboo'
- Complexity and challenge of choices
- Compassion and empathy of health professionals
- Information and communication
- Every journey is a unique journey

CONCLUSION

The evidence suggests parents value or could benefit from, individualised information, choices, and compassionate support from health professionals. The findings also suggested a need for co-ordinated postnatal care, including psychological support.

More research will help understand parents' needs and inform appropriate care pathways for those who chose TOPFA.

Conflict of interest - None.

Ethical Approval - Queen's University Belfast Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences (Ref: MHLS 20_40).

This review is registered on PROSPERO (registration number: CRD42020175970)