Facilitating Technology Use by Older immigrants:
A Scoping Review and Reflection on Fieldwork Experience

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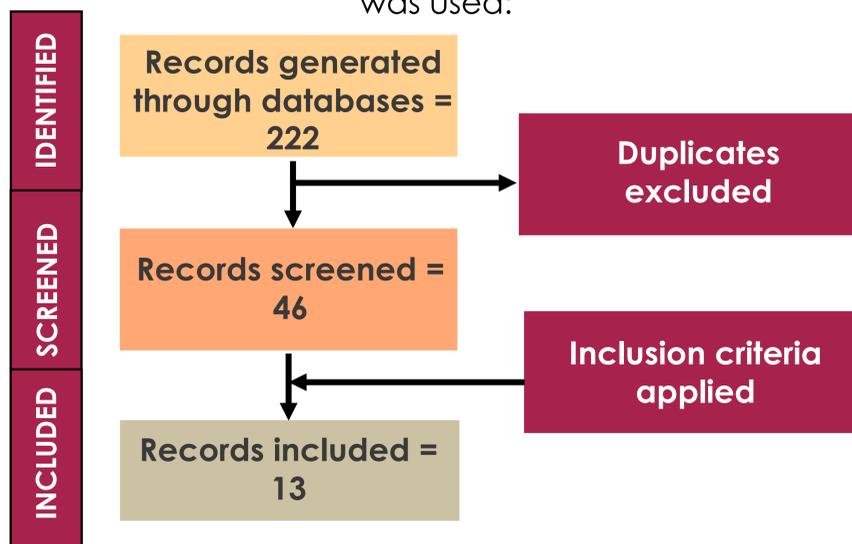
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BACKGROUND

- Technology is an essential and pervasive part of daily living for most, yet some individuals and groups remain excluded from the digital world.
- Digital divide refers to the gap between those who have access to the internet and those who do not.
- Even though technology usage can be beneficial for older immigrants, they experience many challenges and barriers to their use of technology.
- Some of the benefits of using technology for older immigrants can be:
  o Better access to health related information;
  o Easier communication with family and friends; and
  o Reduced isolation and loneliness

OBJECTIVES

This scoping review focuses on the factors that contribute to the digital divide among older immigrants.

METHODS

Arksey & O'Malley's (2005) framework for scoping reviews was used:

Inclusion criteria: peer-reviewed; participants are older immigrants and/or refugees over age 50; published in English between 2007 and 2021
Databases: Web of Science, AgeLine, CINAHL, Social Work Abstracts

Keywords: elder OR elderly OR older people OR seniors AND immigrant(s) OR refugee(s) OR migrant(s) AND online research OR online services OR technology OR computer OR internet OR digital literacy OR telemedicine
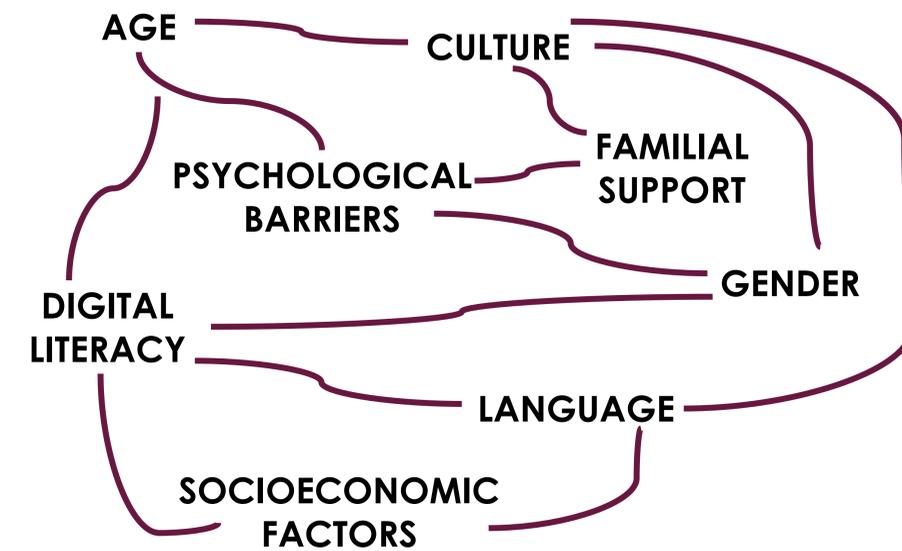
RESULTS

8 overarching factors that contribute to the digital divide were identified from the included records:

AGE	Physical impairments; social norms associated with age
GENDER	Varies across cultures; women are typically more digitally excluded than men
LANGUAGE	English-as-a-second-language speakers experience more challenges for example with google searches
CULTURE	Informs psychological barriers, preferences for technical design or training programs, participation in online initiatives, and technology usage
DIGITAL LITERACY	Experienced technology users are more likely to adopt it
PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS	For example: anxiety re: computer use; gender-based access to and attitudes towards new learning as a "senior"
FAMILY SUPPORT	often reported as a key factor for technology adoption; may be source of encouragement or deterrent
SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS	Income: affects affordability; Education: higher education is associated with likelihood of technology usage

DISCUSSION

- Older immigrants experience a milieu of factors or a web of contingencies that shape their technology adoption:

- The results of this study are of interest to scholars and organizations aiming to minimize the digital divide for older immigrants.
- Future studies can:
  o Expand on the web of contingencies to include other contextual factors;
  o Explore digital divide in various ethnocultural communities, and social contexts
  o Explore technological design features that can accommodate the needs of older immigrants

CONCLUSION

- Older immigrants' digital divide is characterized by age, gender, language, psychological barriers, cultural norms, digital literacy, family support, and socioeconomic factors.
- As service providers incorporate more and more technology in service delivery and access, and the population of aging migrants increases, it is imperative to address the barriers that affect older immigrants' technology usage.