

Effectiveness of psychological interventions in the treatment of perinatal anxiety: A systematic review of systematic reviews

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Introducción

Perinatal anxiety, spanning pregnancy to the first postpartum year, is common and linked to adverse consequences for maternal wellbeing, fetal development, and early bonding. Despite this impact, it remains under-recognized and undertreated compared with other perinatal conditions. The **aim** of this review was to evaluate the effectiveness of psychological interventions for treating antenatal and postnatal anxiety and examine their contribution to improved outcomes across the perinatal period.

Métodos

Five electronic databases (PubMed, Web of Science, Cochrane, PsycINFO, PROSPERO) were searched following PRISMA guidelines. Of 632 records, **8 systematic reviews** were included (Figure 1). Methodological quality was assessed using the AMSTAR-2 tool. Registered in PROSPERO: CRD42024559081.

Resultados

Three reviews (Callanan et al., 2022; Loughnan et al., 2018; van Ravesteyn et al., 2017)

- Focus on traditional CBT
- Cognitive restructuring, exposure, physiological regulation
- Consistently positive outcomes

Two reviews (Nillni et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2021)

- Include online guided formats / integrated programmes
- Show effectiveness of remote and hybrid delivery

Three fear-focused reviews (O'Connell et al., 2019; Stoll et al., 2018; Striebich et al., 2018)

- Target pregnancy-specific anxiety / fear of childbirth
- CBT remains predominant
- Mostly group-based, exposure + psychoeducation adapted to pregnancy

Scan the QR code to access full study details



Conclusiones

The reviewed studies suggest that CBT, mindfulness-based approaches, and related interventions, delivered individually, in groups, or digitally, may reduce anxiety symptoms during pregnancy and the postpartum period. However, methodological variability, the predominance of open trials, and limited follow-up in many studies weaken the strength of the evidence. Higher-quality and more consistent research is needed to better establish their effectiveness.

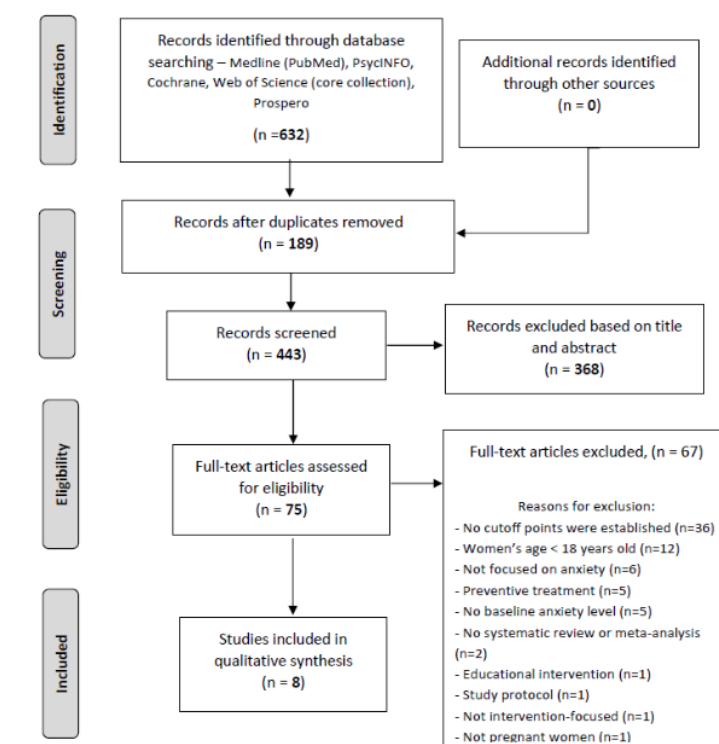


Figure 1 PRISMA Flow Diagram