

Identifying Risk Factors for Anxiety in Older Adults:

A Rapid Review of Observational Studies



Carly Whitmore,¹ **Andrea Iaboni**,^{*2,3} Sébastien Grenier,⁴ Abitha Suthakaran,⁵ Iulia Nicalescu,⁵ Isaac Adedeji,⁵ Mahnoor Akram,⁵ Juliette S. Mojgani,⁵ Sarah Burke Dimitrova,⁵ Alastair Flint,³ Zahra Goodarzi,⁶ Amy Gough,⁷ Heli Juola,⁸ Kristin Reynolds,⁹ Shanna Trenaman,⁷ Erica Weir,¹⁰ Michael Van Ameringen,¹ Anthony Yeung,¹¹ Sarah Neil-Sztramko^{1,5}

1. McMaster University, Hamilton ON
2. University Health Network, Toronto ON
3. University of Toronto, Toronto ON
4. Université de Montréal, Montreal QC

5. Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health
6. University of Calgary, Calgary AB
7. Dalhousie University, Halifax NS
8. Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, Toronto ON

9. University of Manitoba, Winnipeg MB
10. Queen's University, Kingston ON
11. University of British Columbia, Vancouver BC

*attending CAG2023

BACKGROUND.

Anxiety is a prevalent mental health concern that impacts individuals of all ages. However, its impact on older adults is of particular importance due to its potential to exacerbate age-related issues, decrease quality of life, and diminish overall well-being.

REVIEW QUESTION.

What are the modifiable or non-modifiable factors associated with anxiety in older adults?

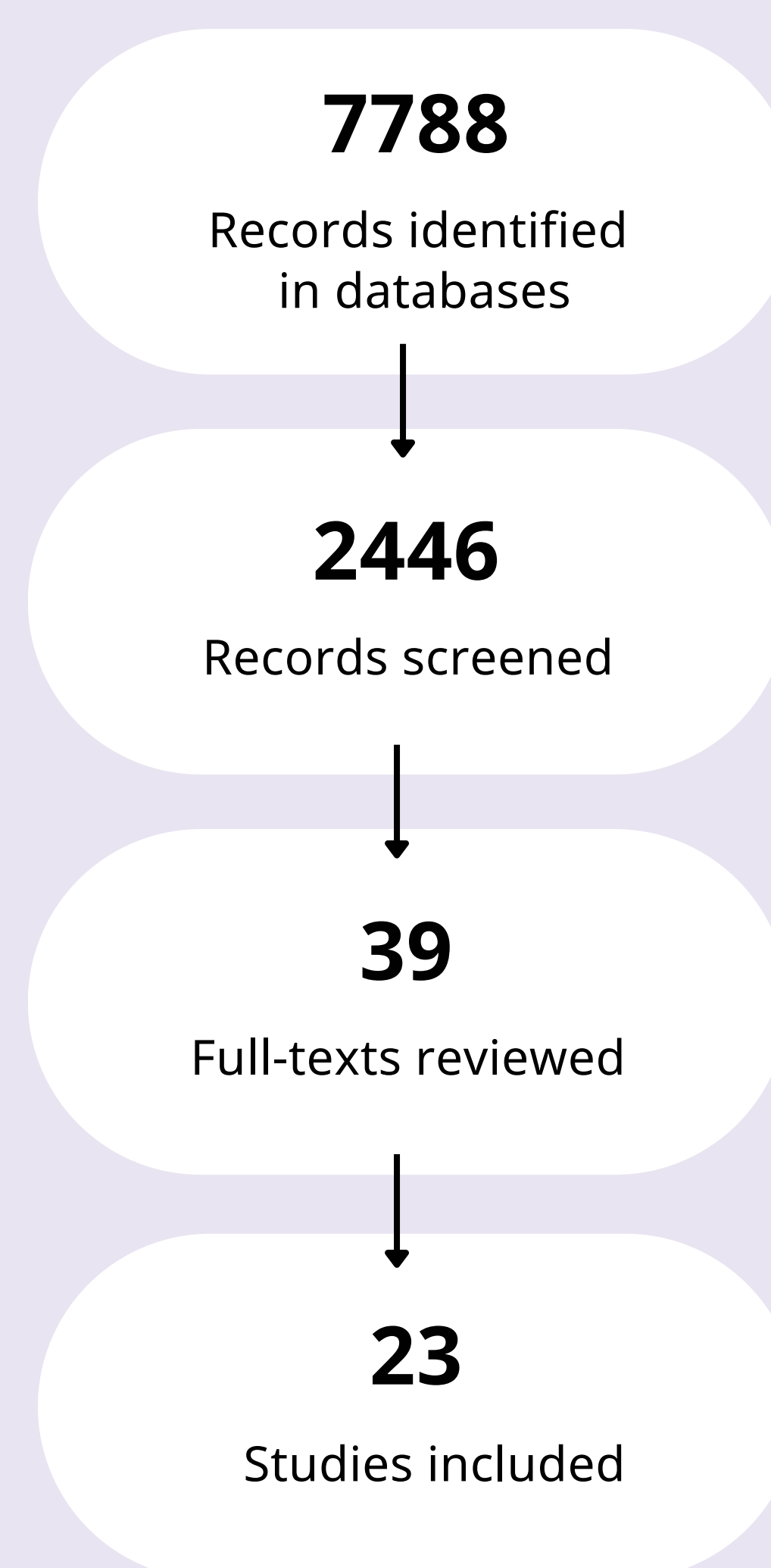
METHOD.

A rapid database search was completed in February 2023.

Eligible studies were:

- Systematic reviews of observational studies
- that examined risk or preventative factors associated with anxiety, fear, fear of falling, or related outcomes,
- in older adults aged 60 years and above

Two reviewers screened, extracted, and appraised each included study.



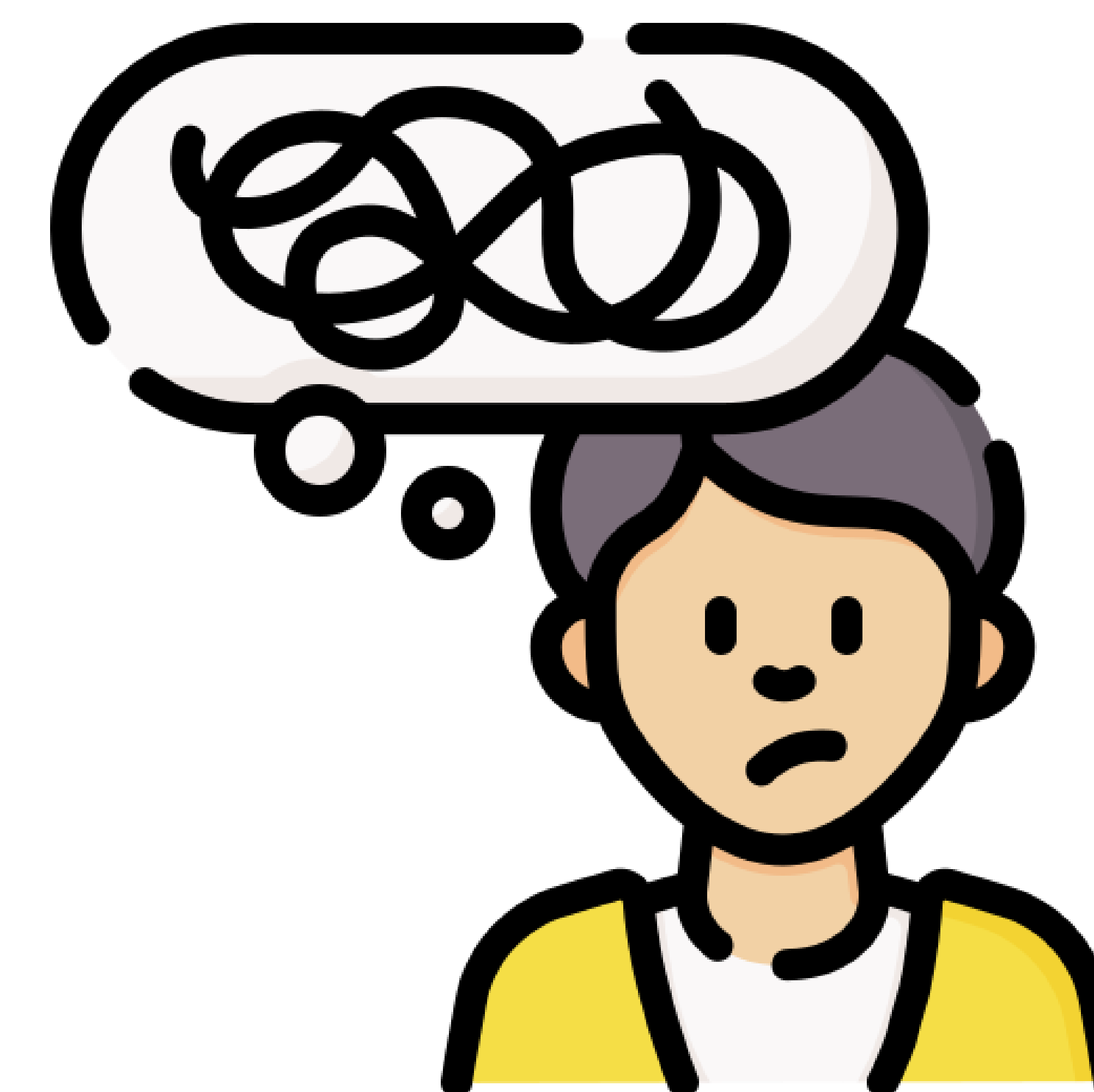
FINDINGS.

There are several factors associated with anxiety and/or fear of falling in older adults.

These include:

- Cognitive impairment or decline
- Female sex
- Functional limitations
- History of falls or impaired balance*
- Multimorbidity
- Older age*
- Pain
- Polypharmacy
- Poor health status (objective or subjective)
- Social isolation or loneliness

*factors associated specifically with fear of falling



Anxiety and fear of falling may be present among older adults due to a combination of factors. These factors can heighten feelings of vulnerability and risk, amplify concerns about independence and ability, or even further intensify feelings of existing anxiety and fear.

APPLICATION.

Screening for anxiety is most effective when targeted to higher risk older adults. The presence of the above factors associated with anxiety may prompt clinicians to consider the use of a screening tool to support case finding or to inquire further about symptoms that comprise the diagnostic criteria for anxiety disorder.



Scan to learn more about
Anxiety in Older Adults clinical guideline
development with the
Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health