

**A SCOPING REVIEW OF THE MENTAL HEALTH EFFECTS OF THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON NEWCOMER CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN
CANADA**

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, disrupted the daily lives of children and youth globally. It posed an unprecedented threat to their mental health due to the quarantine orders, the death of family members, and the disruptions in the economy. Studies have shown that the global prevalence of mental illness amongst children and youth increased considerably during the COVID-19 pandemic, yet little is known about the research exploring the effects of the pandemic on one of the most precarious populations of minors: immigrant children. This scoping review aims to map and explore the scope and depth of the research literature relating to the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on newcomer children and youth in Canada. The researcher scoped literature written in English in Canada from March 2020 to fall 2024. A comprehensive search of ten (10) databases produced one hundred and forty-three (143) possible studies to be scoped. Fifteen (15) duplicate copies were removed, and another one hundred and sixteen (116) were removed for other reasons. After the inclusion and exclusion process was applied, one study met the criteria for scoping. Three themes emerged from this scoping review: Economic Support, Resilience, and Social Support, with sub-themes: r food insecurity, adaptation, resourcefulness, the collapse of the economy, and assimilation and acculturation. The findings indicate that there is a glaring lack of research on the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on newcomer children and youth in Canada. The lack of relevant literature on this topic and the negative impacts of the epidemic on newcomer children and youth mental health in Canada related in the lone study, underscores the need for further research on the topic.

Keywords: COVID-19, Mental Health, Children, Youth, Newcomer, Refugee, Immigrants, Canada

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Chapter One

Introduction

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic was the largest, most challenging, and unprecedented public health crisis in recent history that caused the loss of many lives, shut down the entire world, and crippled the economy. The outbreak of the COVID-19 virus was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020, at a news briefing by WHO's Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (WHO, 2020). This declaration was made after the World Health Organization (WHO) China Country Office was informed of cases of pneumonia of unknown etiology detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China, on December 31, 2019. Since the declaration, Governments took some actions to contain the COVID-19 virus and initiated mitigation measures such as quarantine, travel bans, social distancing, school closures, and work-from-home orders where possible. This action taken by Governments to curb the widespread coronavirus worldwide infringed on people and forced them into restricted ways of life.

Since the pandemic's early stage, people's daily lives worldwide were influenced by the implementation of physical distancing, quarantine, and stay-at-home orders to curb the spread of the coronavirus (Gayatri et al., 2022). Families reported a loss of community and freedom of movement in response to quarantine and lockdown measures (Luttik et al., 2020), which impacted the emotional state of family members and family hardship inside and outside the home (Ayuso et al., 2020). This consequently led to major changes or disruptions as well as widespread anxiety and acute stress, which affected the mental health and well-being of the general population in the world. The pandemic also changed the structure and daily routine of the family (Tan et al., 2022), thus leading to anxiety, stress, depression, health problems, and

uncertainties (González-Calo et al., 2022; Gayatri et al., 2022). In addition, the sudden disruption of social norms and daily activities affected many individuals' behaviour and mental health (Khodavirdipour, 2022).

Children were one of the most precarious groups that were unprecedentedly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, psychological symptoms, such as sleeping disorders/deprivation, suicidal ideation, depression, anxiety, stress, irritability, restlessness, and poor concentration were reported among children worldwide, in countries such as Bangladesh (Yeasmin et al., 2020), China (Tan et al., 2020), USA (Gotlib et al., 2020), West Spain and Italy (Morales et al., 2020), & Ireland (O'Sullivan et al., 2021). In one study, it was documented that children and adolescents experienced deterioration across several mental health domains with depression being the most reported regardless of age (Cost et al., 2021), while another study reported depression among youth with family members who had been infected by COVID-19 (Kuty-Pachecka et al., 2020). Moreover, the mental health impact of the pandemic was estimated to be greater for vulnerable children (Ravens-Siebrer et al., 2021). Reports from one Irish study by Curtin et al (2023) found that in vulnerable children, the pandemic exacerbated inequalities in the early years of life and that this was a crisis in the making.

Some other studies reported that the restriction of movement and closures further exacerbated anxiety levels, stress, and depression in families with children with pre-existing medical conditions (Araújo et al., 2020; Dyer et al., 2021 & Marques de Miranda et al., 2020), and intellectual and developmental disabilities (Neece, 2020). In addition, for children and youth who were exposed to unhealthy or abusive environments in their family home, isolation from peers may have exacerbated their psychological distress (Krause et al., 2022). Children also became addicted to the internet, social media platforms, and smartphones, which contributed to

stress, depression, and the lack of physical activities (Duan et al., 2020; Alanazi et al., 2022; Kallitsoglou et al., 2020; Larsen et al., 2022 & Tan et al., 2022). In addition, children were likely to be abused online due to the pandemic, resulting from increased time spent on uncensored activities (Ghosh et al., 2020). Moreover, it was also reported in a study on Portuguese children conducted by Branquinho et al., (2020) that children turned to substance abuse and became addicted due to the increased level of depression and anxiety during the pandemic. Hence, the negative effects on children and youth mental health reported in these studies caused by the COVID-19 pandemic had serious implications for their mental health.

Thus, there is now a wide body of research on the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the mental health of children worldwide. However, the extent of such research on children in Canada is less clear. This is particularly the case when exploring the effects of COVID-19 on the mental health of newcomer children and youth in Canada. This is a group that, research suggests, may experience mental health challenges because of the migratory experience (Beiser et al., 2011; Sim & Georgiades, 2022).

In recent years, the World Health Organization has been promoting global awareness of the importance of and promotion of mental health. According to Saxena, S. et al., (2005, p.2), mental health is “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and can make a contribution to his or her community.’ Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024). Mental health and mental illnesses are determined by multiple and interacting social, psychological, and biological factors. Mental Health is important at every stage in life, from childhood, adolescence, adulthood, to old age.

Newcomer Children in Canada

Canada is an industrialized nation that welcomes many newcomers, including children and youth. In 2020, (the year when the COVID-19 pandemic began) in the 2021 Annual Global Trends Report to the Canadian Parliament, the statistics showed that Canada welcomed 16,250 newcomers, including children and youth. According to The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) (2022), Canada continues to be the global leader in refugee resettlement in 2021, resettling 20,428, making it a three-year leader in resettlement worldwide. Additionally, Immigration, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada declared in the 2022 Annual Global Trends Report presented to the Canadian Parliament on Immigration that in 2021, 60,288 refugees and protected persons, including children and youth, were admitted as permanent residents. Furthermore, 11, 377 individuals, including children, were admitted on humanitarian, compassionate, and public policy grounds. Given the high numbers of immigrant children who enter Canada each year, and in conformity with the laws and regulations of Human Rights and the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the Canadian government is obliged to implement policies that will protect its people and citizens, including immigrant and refugees, especially women and children.

Studies show that newcomer children in Canada encounter several factors that affect their mental health throughout the migration journey. The migration trajectory can be divided into three stages: premigration, migration, and settlement (Herati & Meyer, 2020). Each stage is associated with vulnerability and exposure to children's and adolescents' mental health. Pre-migration violence or threats within or directed toward the family are related to poor mental health among adolescents (Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011). It was reported in one study that

reviewed the mental health among displaced and refugee children that pre-migration family exposure to violence was highly predictive of poor mental health in children (Fazel et al., 2012).

The process of migration and acculturation can present significant risk factors for psychiatric disorders in immigrants, especially children and adolescents (Ojurongbe, 2023). Findings from the New Canadian Child and Youth Studies (Beiser, M. N. M. N., & Hou, F., 2006); Beiser, M., 2010; Beiser et al., 2010 & Beiser et al., 2011) conclude that newcomer children and youth mental health are gravely impacted during these processes. For example, in one study conducted in British Columbia, Canada, the diagnostic prevalence of conduct, ADHA, and mood/anxiety disorders were the main outcomes in immigrant children and adolescents (Guadermann, et.al., 2023). In another study in Quebec, Canada, the total rate of psychopathology excluding simple phobia was 21% amongst immigrant children compared with 11% in a province-wide survey of young adolescents. Similarly, it was reported in another study that overanxious disorder was high in immigrant children with a prevalence of 13%; the rates of major depression and conduct disorders were also high, at 5% and 6% among children and youth (Tousignant et al., 1999).

Moreover, immigrant and refugee children often encounter difficulties in acquiring necessities in host countries, such as food, shelter, education, health, and freedom of expression, and struggle to express feelings related to trauma, violence, and conflict (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2019). Not only does the social context change when children and adolescents migrate with their families, but the lack of familiarity with the cultural context in their destination, such as language barriers (Beiser & Hou, 20001), also aggravate stress-related changes in the family (Merry et al., 2017). These mental health effects can be stressful and destabilizing for both children and adolescents (Salami et al., 2023).

The COVID-19 pandemic also created difficulties in accessing services that assist newcomer children in transitioning smoothly into their host country (Salami et al., 2022; Tulli et al., 2020 & Nazish et al., 2021). In most cases, settlement service providers and agencies may assist by connecting individuals with local resources to help with the transition and providing non-clinical mental health and well-being assistance. The quarantine orders implemented by governments resulted in limited or lack of accessibility to essential services (Neece, 2020), thus, demarcating access to critical services. A study conducted in Canada by Benjamin et al., (2021) during the first six months of the COVID-19 pandemic specifically on the access to and delivery of community mental health care reported that refugees and immigrant children encountered an exacerbation in mental health problems, inequities in social determinant of health and decrease access to integrated primary care and community mental health services. Similarly, another Canadian study by Hynie et al., (2022) delineated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health services rapidly transitioned to virtual care and online and outreach resources, making services visible to clients and providers more challenging in a virtual environment.

In addition, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), (2020) warned that the consequences of the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic, deteriorated socio-economic conditions, protracted displacement, and the critical shortfall in solutions to displacement led to widespread despair among refugees. The United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi stated that the need to support mental health assistance for displaced populations before the pandemic was critical. However, during the pandemic, they dealt with an emergency and a picture of despair. Given the importance and urgency for newcomer children and adolescents to access the services of mental health providers and agencies in Canada, the purpose of this

scoping review is to explore the nature and extent of the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on newcomer children and youth in Canada.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of a scoping review is to map the relevant literature on a given topic, explore and acquire a greater conceptual understanding of the scope and depth of the literature, identify gaps, and use the existing empirical knowledge to interpret issues and concerns to inform further research applications, especially in policy decisions (Tricco et al., 2018). Thus, the purpose of this present study was to map and explore the scope and depth of the research literature relating to the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on newcomer children and youth in Canada. The focus of this scoping review was from the beginning of the pandemic, March 23, 2020 (World Health Organization, 2020), to the compilation of data, fall 2024. Additionally, a scoping review (rather than a systematic review) is most appropriate as the broad research question sought to examine the literature's nature and range in this field (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010). Also, the scoping review included a diverse selection of study designs but no quality assessments, as the aim was not to assess the quality of evidence, but merely to identify themes and gaps.

Significance of the Study

As the previous sections argued, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic posed health threats all over the world and had an unanticipated impact on children's and adolescents' mental health. The findings of studies globally showed that the COVID-19 pandemic affected children's and adolescents' mental health, resulting in psychological/behavioural issues such as irritability Cost et al., (2021), depression, Tan et al., (2020), and anxiety, Yeasmin et al., (2020) which agitated them. From the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic, changes in children and youth's

behavioural patterns were evident. In the study of Patrick et al. (2020), it was reported that 14% of parents reported worsening behavioral health for their children. Likewise, the results from the cross-sectional survey by Liu et al. (2020) found that only concern for life and health was associated with a higher likelihood of somatic symptoms among primary school students.

Moreover, according to the United Nations Refugee Agency (2022), Canada is the leading country that welcomed the largest number of newcomers, including children and youth, during the pandemic. Studies showed that children and youth were most likely to experience mental health issues during pre-migration, migration, resettlement, and acculturation (Herati et al., 2023; Ojurongbe, 2023; Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2019). Each phase in migration is associated with specific mental health risks and exposure. In correlation, the study of Kirmayer (2011), indicated that certain challenges in migrant mental health included communication difficulties because of language and cultural differences; the effect of cultural shaping of symptoms and illness behaviour on diagnosis, coping, and treatment; differences in family structure and process affecting adaptation, acculturation, and intergenerational conflict; and aspects of acceptance by the receiving society that affect employment, social status and integration.

In addition, even though the scoping review of Salami et al, (2022) on Immigrant Child Health in Canada included 237 (100%) articles that met the inclusion data, only 37 (15%) of the articles in the review focused on mental health, but none of those articles explored the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on newcomer children and youth. Similarly, in another scoping review by Nazish et al. (2021) in Canada on the Mental Health of Immigrant and Refugee Children, of the 27 articles that met the inclusion criteria, none of the articles identified the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on newcomer children and youth.

Furthermore, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (2016), even though Canada is an industrial country, there is a high level of childhood poverty. This makes Canada unique among developed nations and makes children in this country more vulnerable to the negative mental health effects of poverty and COVID-19. In addition, Canada is a northern country with harsh winter seasons. Children are generally locked inside during the winter months. With this weather fact, the government of Canada had to implement stay-at-home orders to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the discussions above have also indicated, both the migratory experience as well as the onslaught of COVID-19 restrictions had put added pressure on the mental health of newcomer children and youth in Canada.

Given the high numbers of newcomer children and youth in Canada and the available evidence on the effects of COVID-19 on youth in general, with the known data about childhood poverty in Canada, and the stay-at-home orders implemented by the Canadian government during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to scope the existing literature to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic compounded the mental health effects on newcomer children and youth from the beginning to the gathering of data for this thesis, to fall 2024. Additionally, it is hoped that policymakers and other relevant stakeholders will use the findings of this scoping review provincially and federally to conduct further research and implement policies, programs, and health promotions to meet the needs of children's and youth's mental health during the post-pandemic period and for future pandemics.

Research Questions

To fully understand the issue, this research examined the following questions:

- (1) What is the nature of the extent, range, and scope of related literature on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of newcomer children and youth in Canada?
- (2) What mental health effects of COVID-19 are mentioned in the literature?
- (3) What are the gaps in the research on this topic?

Chapter Two

Methodology

This study used a scoping review methodology and the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to report the findings. According to Arksey & O'Malley (2005), a scoping review sought to determine the nature and scope of research evidence including any ongoing research on the topic under investigation. In addition, Munn et al. (2018) stated that the goal of a scoping review is to identify knowledge gaps, scope a body of literature, clarify concepts, or investigate research. Also, Peter et al., (2021), stated that a scoping review is a type of evidence synthesis that has the objective of identifying and mapping relevant literature evidence that meets pre-determined inclusion criteria, regarding the topic, files, context, concept, or issue under review.

Scoping reviews are used to identify knowledge gaps, set research agendas, and identify implications for decision-making. According to Tricco et al. (2018), a scoping review is a knowledge synthesis that follows a systematic approach to map evidence on a topic and identify main concepts, theories, sources, and knowledge gaps. Additionally, scoping studies are concerned with contextualizing knowledge in terms of identifying the current state of understanding; identifying the sorts of things we know and do not know; and then setting this within policy and practice context (Anderson et al., 2008). Furthermore, scoping reviews involve the synthesis and analysis of a wide range of research and non-research material to provide greater conceptual clarity about a specific topic or field of evidence (Davis et al., 2009). Moreover, a scoping review strives to provide an overview or map of the evidence rather than a rigorously evaluated and synthesized finding or answer to a specific topic (Armstrong et al., 2011). Thus, scoping reviews systematically identify and chart relevant literature that meets

predetermined inclusion criteria available on a given topic to address specified objective(s) and review question(s) concerning key concepts, theories, data, and evidence gaps (Peters t. al., 2021).

Justification of the Scoping Review as a Methodological Approach

The methodology of this research, a scoping review evaluated the scope, the type of research literature, the diversity in research (i.e. Empirical, from scholarly databases), grey literature (i.e. non-peered-reviewed evidence from Google Scholar, reports from government and non-government organizations, documents and online media) that were available on the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on newcomer children and youth in Canada. Scoping reviews represent an increasingly popular approach to reviewing health research evidence (Levac et al., 2010). Furthermore, they support health research's advancement, application, and relevance. Therefore, this scoping review sought to summarize, synthesize, and identify gaps in the available data to enable recommendations for future educational and research policies to be made in Canada. In addition, this scoping review mapped the literature according to relevance, time, place, population sample, and origin. It clarified, summarized, and disseminated the research themes or identified the gaps in the literature on the topic under research and discussion.

Research Design and Procedure

A scoping review of the existing literature in Canada was conducted to carry out this study. The literature that was scoped is the scholarly English-language literature, both scholarly and grey literature, that investigated the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on newcomer youth in Canada from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic to the present date of this review. The researcher excluded French-language literature from this study, as the translation services and costs required to review the literature were not readily available.

However, the existing literature was scoped using Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) five-stage framework. First, the research questions were identified; second, the relevant studies were reviewed; third, the studies selected; fourth, the data was charted; and finally, the results were collated, summarized, and reported.

Methodological Framework

The methodological framework for scoping reviews was developed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) and further refined by Levac et al., (2010). The framework that was chosen for this scoping review is Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) five-stage framework. This framework focused on the breadth of evidence to provide a better understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic affected children's and youth's mental health in Canada. Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) five-stage framework included: (1) identifying the research question; (2) identifying the relevant studies; (3) selecting the studies; developing a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria and to help determine the relevance of literature (4) charting the data; extract data from eleven studies using the data-charting form and determine whether the approach to data extraction is consistent with the research question and purpose, and (5) collating, summarizing, and reporting the results; summarizing characteristics of studies and explaining thematic analysis, communicating the outcome clearly and identifying how the study is useful and how it can advance the field, (i.e. practical implications). The frameworks are described as follows:

Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) Framework Stage 1 – Identifying the research question

According to Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) framework, stage one of the scoping review begins with identifying the research question. While the main challenge of scoping review questions is that they are broad, this first stage of the framework set the foundation for the topic of interest, which was developed and explored. To clarify this stage, Arksey and O'Malley

(2005) recommended that researchers must formulate a broad research question with an articulated scope of inquiry. This stage is to set the range for the search parameters and the ramifications of the search strategies. Furthermore, this first stage of the framework clearly stated the research question's purpose; linked the research question and purpose, specific population, context, and concept.

Arksey and O'Malley's Framework Stage 2 – Identifying the relevant studies

The objective of this second stage in Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) methodological framework was to identify the relevant studies. This involved the development of a decision plan for where to search, keywords used, which sources to search for, period, and the language. According to Davis et al. (2009), comprehensive breadth and depth are important to search. This concurred with this second stage of Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) methodological framework because they stated that a scoping review aims to synthesize and analyze a wide range of research and non-research material to provide greater conceptual clarity about a specific topic or a field of evidence. Correspondingly, Levac et al. (2010) also acceded with this second stage of Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) methodological framework as they reiterated that the breadth of the search can include published and unpublished studies, to reviews that are appropriate for answering the central research question.

Consequently, research was conducted on peer-reviewed journals in the following databases: Child Development and Adolescent Studies (EBSCO), Academic Research Premier, Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), APA PsycINFO, APA PsycArticles, LGBTQ+ Source, ERIC, and SocINDEX. The keywords used in this Scoping Review of the peer-reviewed literature were the following:

Immigrants OR Newcomers OR Migrants OR Immigrants OR Immigration OR Migration OR
Transients OR Refugees OR Transnational

AND

Child OR Children OR Adolescents OR Youths OR Infants OR Toddlers OR Preschool OR
Young Adults

AND

Mental Health OR Mental Illness OR Disease OR Well-Being OR Illness OR Wellness

AND

Canada OR Alberta, OR British Columbia, OR Manitoba, OR New Brunswick, OR
Newfoundland and Labrador, OR Nova Scotia, OR Ontario, OR Prince Edward Island, OR
Quebec, OR Saskatchewan OR Yukon OR Northwest Territories.

AND

COVID-19 OR COVID-19 Pandemic

A detailed search of the grey literature was conducted on Google Scholar, Open Dissertations, and the Canadian Institute for Health Information. At this stage, the researcher engaged two librarians to improve the length and breadth of the search by using their expertise and comprehensive knowledge of database searches.

The literature scoped included all available literature in English-language from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, March 23, 2020, to the date of this present study, fall, 2024. Despite Canada being a bilingual country (English and French), French literature was excluded from this

research as the translation and the cost were not readily available. Consequently, only the literature published in English-language was scoped.

Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) Framework Stage 3 – Study selection

The third stage in Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) methodological framework involved including and excluding the data that was extracted. Inclusion criteria were: 1) population: newcomer children and youths; 2) location: Canada; 3) phenomenon of interest in mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic; 4) research design; 5) publication date: March 2020 to the present date of this study, Fall 2024. Exclusion criteria were published studies before March 2020, any articles that do not include children or youth, studies in French literature inside Canada, studies outside Canada, and studies with a mixed sample of children and adults where findings were aggregated. The researcher tracked the number of studies screened, assessed eligibility, and included them in this scoping review, along with the reasons for exclusion at each stage. This was presented as a flow chart on the modified PRISMA diagram in Appendix B.

Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) Framework Stage 4 – Charting and Data Extraction

This stage in Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) methodological framework involved extracting the data from included studies. According to Arksey and O'Malley (2005), the material synthesis is crucial as scoping review studies are not summaries of many articles. A descriptive-analytic model was used in the data collection. The researcher used a data extraction form to ensure consistency with the research questions and purpose. Hence, the researcher identified themes related to the research questions and purpose. Once the data was extracted, the data was presented in a narrative form to contextualize the findings within the study design and setting.

Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) Framework Stage 5 – Collating, summarizing, and reporting the results.

At the fifth stage of Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) methodological framework, the data was collated, summarized, and reported. The data was charted and thematically organized, consisting of basic numerical analyses, based on the population (newcomer children and youth), period, and Canadian provinces/territories. This process identified trends in the research and where there were significant gaps. The researcher then organized the information through thematic analysis using the table as a starting point. Combined with the researcher's discussion, the "descriptive analysis" model was used to determine the final themes. In addition, at this stage, the meaning of the findings was considered as they were related to the overall study purpose and discussion of the main themes found. Finally, any research gaps and their implications for future research, practice, and policy were identified.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics approval was not required from the Mount Saint Vincent Ethical Committee as no human subject was needed for this scoping review. Furthermore, the information depended exclusively on published and publicly available information that is legally accessible to the public and protected by law, and there was no reasonable expectation of privacy.

Theoretical Framework

Bronfenbrenner Ecological Model (1979)

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (1979) was used to identify themes described in the English-language literature on the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on newcomer children and youths in Canada. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (1979) stresses how different environmental systems influence human development. This model looks at a

child's development within the context of the system of relationships that form his or her environment. Additionally, it explains how an individual's life is affected by the actors, institutions, policy practices, and attitudes that are a part of these systems: the *microsystem*, *mesosystem*, *exosystem*, *macrosystem*, and *chronosystem*. By considering the dynamic interactions between individuals and their ecological context, this ecological model underscores the significance of various factors that shape children and youth mental health, particularly emphasizing the immediate environment and the larger context in which they interact.

The *microsystem* has the most frequent and immediate personal contact with the child. This level of the ecological model is essential in shaping an individual's development as it accounts for direct experiences and relationships that influence behaviour, beliefs, and values. It includes any immediate relationships or organizations the child interacts with, such as the family, peer group, or school setting. The *microsystem* encompasses the relationships, as well as the interactions a child has with his immediate surroundings. Additionally, at this level, temperament, cognitive abilities, and physical attributes can significantly impact an individual's development. Moreover, environmental factors such as socioeconomic status, family resources, and neighbourhood quality can shape the individual's experiences within this system.

The *mesosystem* layer describes the connection between the structures of the child's *microsystem*. For example, a parent's active involvement in school can have a positive effect on a child's academic performance, and overall well-being and development. It is also the connection between the elements of the microsystem and those of the exosystem such as the interaction between the family and the social welfare system, or the neighbours.

Another layer is the *exosystem*. The *exosystem* layer defines the larger social system where the child does not interact directly. This level of the ecological model includes factors

such as community resources, government policies, and availability of social services. The structures in this layer impact the child's development by affecting some of the structures in her *microsystem*. For example, a child living in an environment with limited access to education and healthcare may face developmental challenges due to environmental factors. Similarly, a parent's church or religious beliefs can affect children based on how parents interact with them.

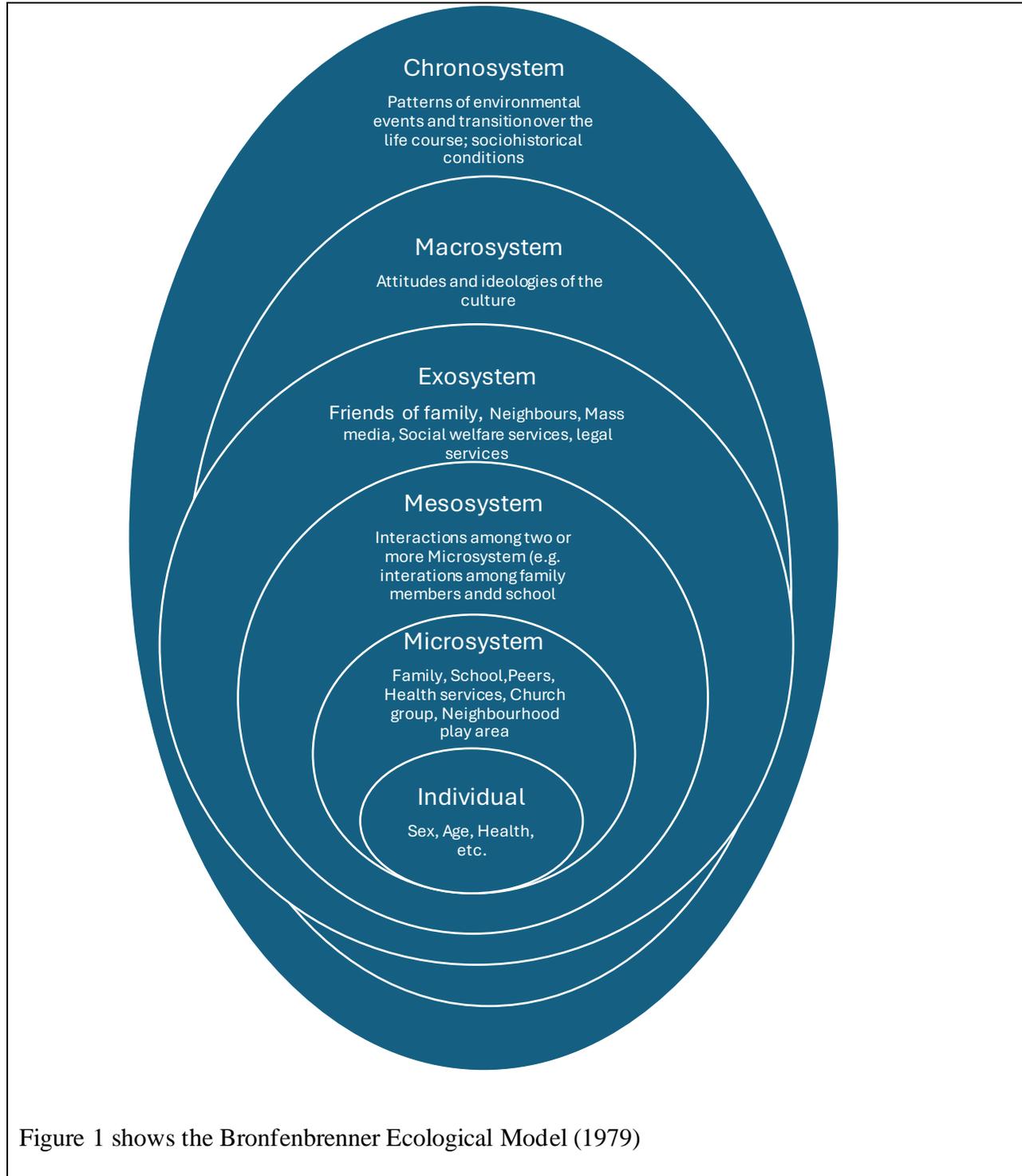
Bronfenbrenner's (1979) *macrosystem* encompasses the broader societal ideologies, including cultural values that shape a child's development. Cultural context can shape how individuals perceive and interpret their experiences, ultimately influencing their behaviour and developmental outcomes. For example, a child's cultural beliefs or the legal system may impact his/her development.

The *chronosystem* is the outermost ring in the Bronfenbrenner Ecological Systems Theory (1979). This outermost ring encompasses all factors, events, and circumstances occurring over an individual's lifetime that affect his/her psycho-social development. The *chronosystem* comprises both normative life transitions such as marriage, graduating from school, procreation, as well as non-normative life transitions such as an accident, a parental divorce, and a car accident. It examines the experiences a child encounters throughout childhood and how they affect their lives. It encompasses all the environmental encounters, such as major life events or transitions and major time-influenced political, social, or cultural events. It also includes changes in culture and/or people's attitudes, technological adaptation, etc., and how these may impact the child. For example, the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks resulted in hate crimes, racism, bigotry, and xenophobia against Muslims in North America. This changed the social and political climate for Muslims as Islamophobia remains a prevalent problem. Internalized effects of Islamophobia are more prevalent among younger Muslims who have faced anti-Muslim tropes

in popular culture, news, social media, political rhetoric, and policy. This negatively impacts their self-image and mental health (Anadolu, 2011, n.d.).

In summary, changes or conflicts in any of the layer's ripple throughout the other layers. Therefore, to study a child's development and well-being, we must look at the child in his immediate environment and the interaction with the larger environment. In this research, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (1979) was used as the undergirding theory for this review. The lens of this theory presented an understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the mental health of newcomer children and youth from every level. Additionally, its use paved the way for the researcher to identify, structure themes, and organize the multi-faceted mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on newcomer children and youths from the beginning to the end of the pandemic in Canada.

Bronfenbrenner Ecological Model (1979)



Chapter Three

Charting the Data

3.1 Introduction

This scoping review mapped the relevant literature and explored and acquired a greater conceptual understanding of the scope and depth of the research literature relating to the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on newcomer children and youth in Canada. This scoping review used one (1) source to populate the data chart presented. According to Arksey and O'Malley (2005), synthesizing material is crucial as scoping review studies are not summaries of many articles. In addition, Arksey and O'Malley (2005) stated that when choosing studies for scoping reviews, possible studies are evaluated meticulously, and the selection criteria are updated as knowledge of the literature grows. Based on a combination of keywords in Appendix A, the initial search for this review identified one hundred and forty-three (143) potential sources. The researcher then applied the inclusion and exclusion criteria in Table 1.0 to the search strategy and identified the studies closely related to the research question. The inclusion and exclusion criteria and the aim of the research reduced the number of eligible sources to twelve (12). Of the twelve (12) sources, eleven (11) were excluded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria.

3.2 Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

As part of the eligibility criteria, the literature scoped focused on the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on newcomer children and youths in Canada. Peer-reviewed journals written in English were included if they were published from March 2020 to fall 2024. Papers were excluded if they did not fit the conceptual framework of this scoping review, had a mixed

population of children and adults, were written in any language other than English, and were published before March 2020 and after fall 2024.

Table 1.0 Eligibility Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Sample	Newcomer, Immigrants, Migrants, Immigration, Migration, Transients, Refugee, Transnational (must be a variable)	Newcomer, Immigrants, Migrants, Immigration, Migration, Transients, Refugee, Transnational (not a variable) Mixed samples of children and adults
Phenomenon of interest	Mental health effects of COVID-19 on newcomer children and youth in Canada	Newcomer children and youth whose mental health is not impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic inside and outside Canada
Language	English	Any other language other than English
Location	Canada	Any other country than Canada
Publication	After March 2020	Before March 2020 and after Fall 2024, articles that do not include children and youth, French literature inside or outside Canada

3.3 Search Methods

A search strategy was developed with two Mount Saint Vincent University Library librarians. We searched the following databases individually from March 2020: Child and Adolescent (EBSCO), Medline, Academic Research Premier, Cumulative Index to Nursing

and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), APA PsycINFO, APA PsyArticles, SocINDEX, ERIC, and LGBTQ+ Source. We used a combination of keywords and subject headings to conduct a complete search for each database. In addition to searching databases, we searched grey literature on Google Scholar using intitle, allintitle, site (e.g., gov.ca), Open Dissertations, and the Canadian Institute for Health Information. Lindsay MacCallum, an experienced librarian, assisted with the first search. Stan Orlov, another experienced librarian, assisted with the second search, refining and removing the duplicates.

3.4 Screening and Selection

Based on a combination of keywords in Appendix A and a thorough search of the databases, the initial search for this review identified one hundred and forty-three (143) potential sources. From the total number of resources, fifteen (15) duplicates, replicated in the databases, were removed, after reading the titles and authors, along with one hundred and sixteen (116) for other reasons. These reasons included the wrong population of children and youth studies, for example, mixed samples of children and adults, and studies done in other countries. This reduced the number of studies screened to twelve (12). The researcher then applied the inclusion and exclusion criteria in Table 1.0 to the search strategy to identify the studies closely related to the research question. The inclusion and exclusion criteria and the aim of the research reduced the number of eligible sources to one (1).

3.5 Data Extraction and Management

The standardized extraction sheet in Appendix C was developed. Data in duplicate was extracted. Of the twelve (12) sources, eleven (11) were excluded because they did not meet the requirements of the data extraction sheet. In addition, the eleven (11) studies were rejected because they did not align with the inclusion criteria of this scoping review. The characteristics

outlined in Table 1.2 resulted in one (1) source meeting the aim of this inquiry, thereby making it eligible for this scoping review.

3.6 Results

In this scoping review, one (1) study was identified from the databases searched that addresses the mental health effects of newcomer children and youth in Canada published between March 2020 and Fall 2024. No studies or articles were found in the grey literature. The findings of this research indicated a paucity of research focusing on this research topic in Canada. As such, only one (1) study met the inclusion criteria (Table 2.0). This study was analyzed and summarized in depth. The researcher appraised its relevance and applicability to the current research questions and aims. The information is presented below in Table 3.0 in a descriptive-analytical model based on the following characteristics: author, year of publication, country/origin, aim/purpose, study population, methodology, and key findings. The results from the literature review indicated that the mental stress effects for newcomer youth in Canada include indicators of mental health problems such as sadness, stress, confusion, isolation, helplessness, nervousness, hopelessness, or depression (Nakhaie et al., 2022) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 2.0 List of Authors Included in the Scoping Review

Nakhaie, R., Ramos, H., Vosoughi, D., & Baghdadi, O. (2022). Mental Health of Newcomer Refugee and Immigrant Youth During COVID-19. <i>Canadian Ethnic Studies</i> , 54(1), 1-28. https://doi.org/10.1353/ces.2022.0000

Table 3.0 Characteristics of included study (n = 1)

Author	Year of Publication	Country/Origin	Aim/Purpose	Study Population	Methodology	Key Findings
Nakhaie et al.	2022	Canada	To examine how the degree of newcomer youth assimilation, food insecurity, resilience, and social connections affect the mental health of recent refugee and immigrant youth in a mid-sized city during the COVID-19 pandemic	Newcomer (Refugee and Immigrants)	Survey	Indicators of mental health Problems include stress, felt sad, confused, isolated, helpless, nervous, or depressed

Chapter Four

Collating, Summarizing, and Reporting the Results

4.1 Introduction

In stage 5 of Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) scoping review framework, the focus is on collating, summarizing, and presenting the review's findings. The first part of this presentation is the descriptive results based on a numerical analysis of this scoping review. The analysis highlights the sample (newcomer children and youth in Canada), publication date, and year of the studies. The second part of this presentation is the thematic organization of the findings, which are based on three themes: economic support, resilience, and social support, and sub-themes: food insecurity, collapse of economy, adaptation, resourcefulness, assimilation, and acculturation. The critical analysis of these themes and sub-themes from a scoping review perspective is to highlight the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on newcomer children and youth in Canada. The themes and sub-themes provide a comprehensive understanding of the mental health effects that newcomers faced in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic. They identified the gaps in the research literature and the need for further studies. This scoping review includes one (1) study conducted in 2022 in Ontario, Canada. The information is presented in the tables below.

Table 4.0 Number of sources by publication type

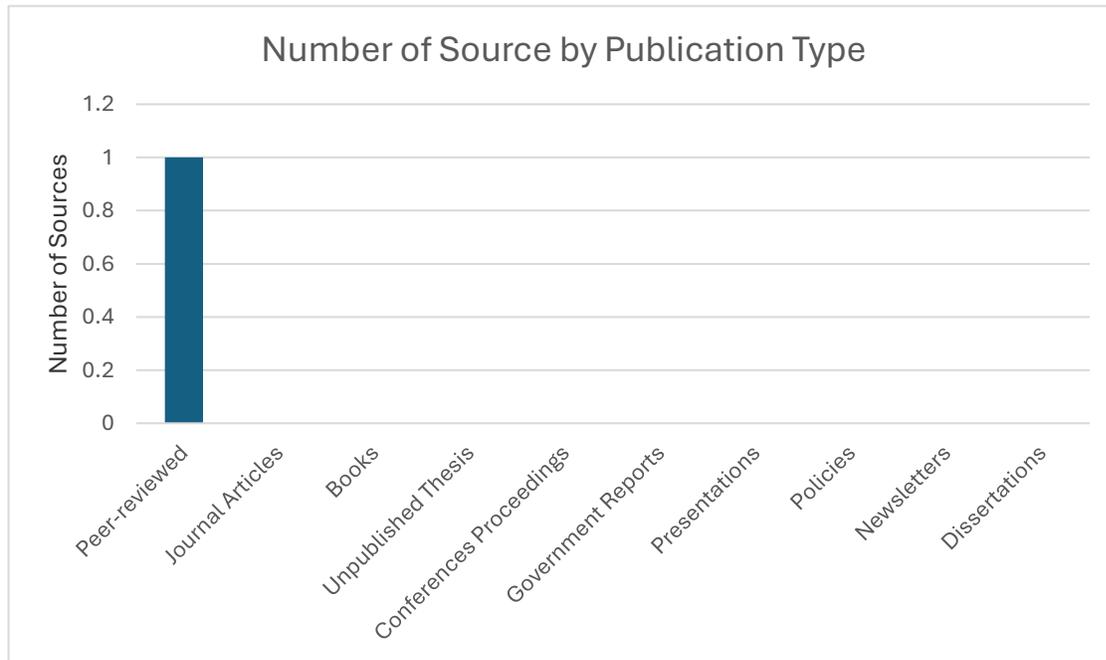


Table 4.0 represents the number of sources by publication type. The breakdown displays one peer-reviewed article that is used in this scoping review.

Table 5.0 Number of publications by year

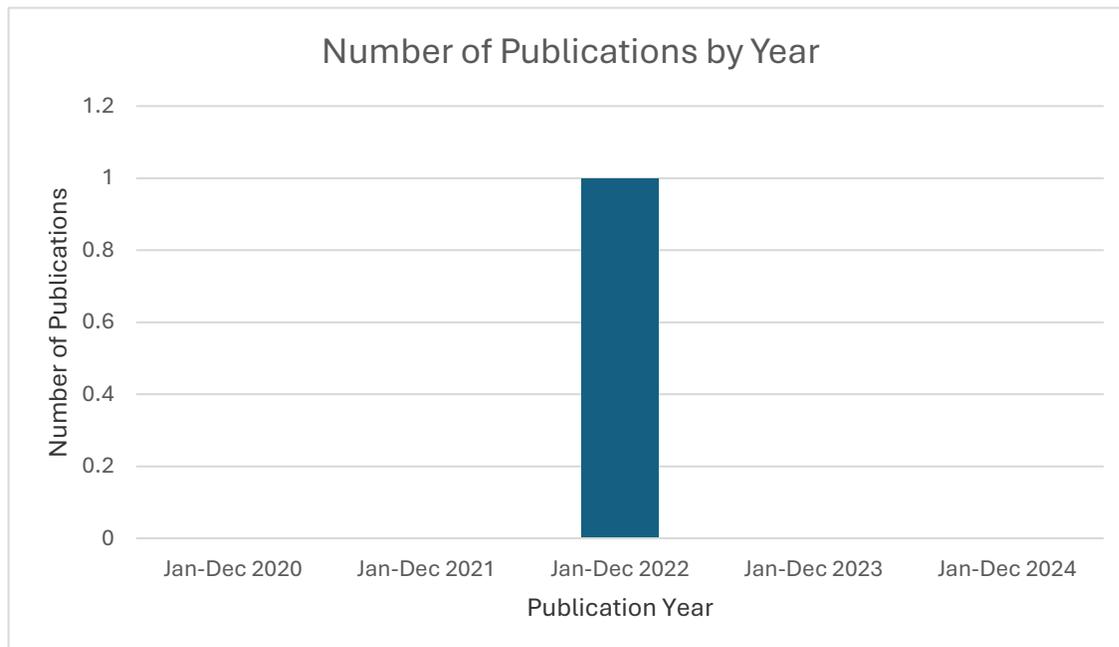


Table 5.0 shows the number of publications by year that are used in the data analysis. It shows that one study done in 2022 met the inclusion criteria for this scoping review.

Table 6.0 shows the sample population by category

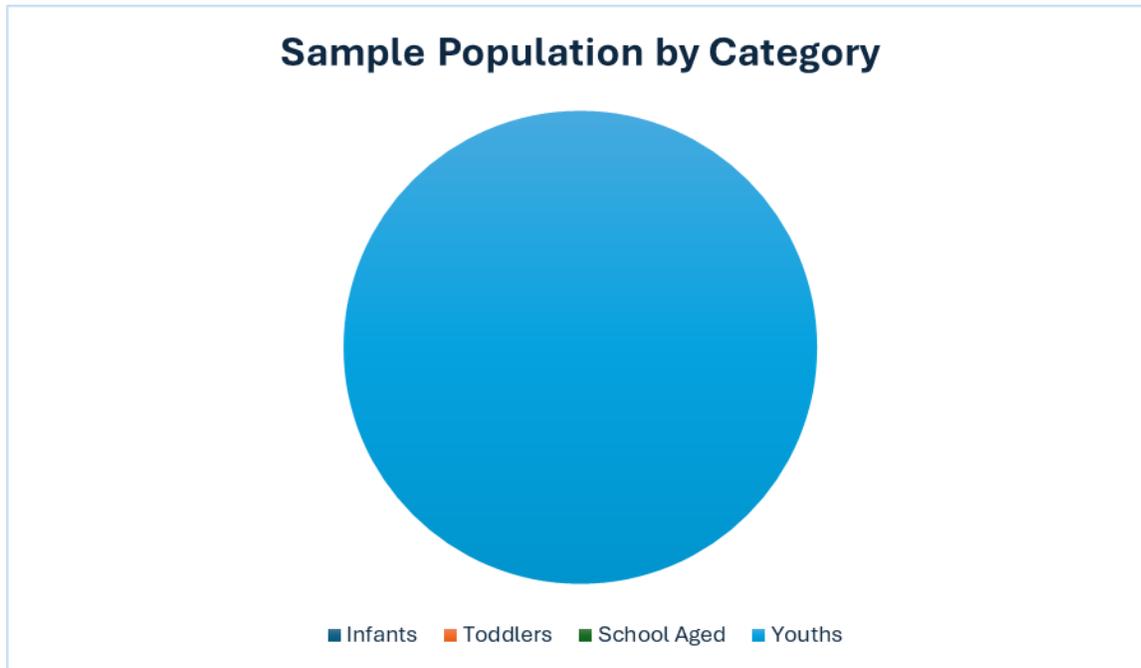


Table 6.0 represents the sample population by category. It shows that the sample population from the one study that met the inclusion criteria was youths

Table 7.0 represents the number of studies published by Canadian provinces.

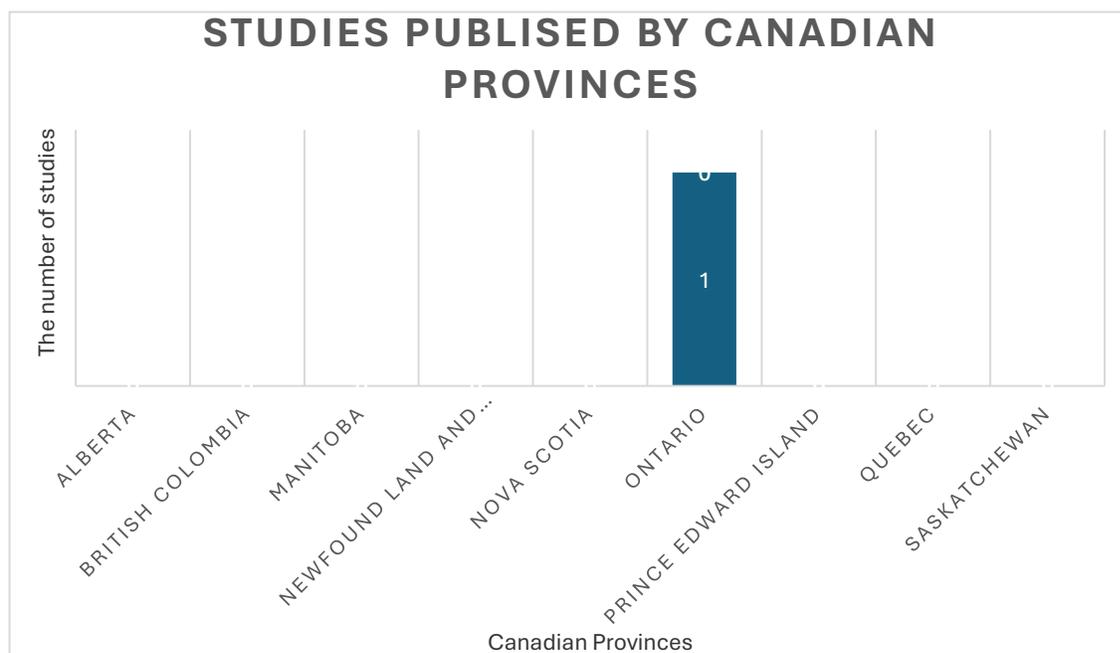


Table 7.0 represents the number of published studies in Canada. It shows that one study was published in the province of Ontario.

4.2 Major Themes

This scoping review aimed to explore and map the scope and depth of the research literature relating to the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on newcomer children and youth in Canada. During the charting process, three themes emerged from the one study that resulted from this review. These themes subsume other sub-themes that appeared in the literature. The main themes are Social Support, Resilience, and Economic Support. The sub-themes are food insecurity, adaptation, resourcefulness, collapse of economy, and assimilation and acculturation.

Main Theme 1: Economic Support

Economic Support is the first theme emerging from this scoping review. Due to the quarantine orders, the doors of most workplaces were shut. Trading, business development, the closing of the borders, and the transportation of goods and services were gravely impacted

(Freeman et al., 2022). Consequently, many parents lost their livelihood (Nicole et al., 2020), which minimized parents' ability to provide the family's basic needs, such as food. This developed the sub-theme, food insecurity. According to a survey of Canadians by the Community Food Centres, food insecurity in Canada increased by 39 percent during the first 2 months of COVID-19 (Community Food 2020).

Another sub-theme that developed under this main theme is the collapse of the economy. In an article by Andrade et al. (2020), the findings indicated that the pandemic disproportionately impacted lower-income families, families from ethnic minorities, vulnerable groups, and women. This resulted in the family's inability to provide economic support during the COVID-19 pandemic (Mbazzi et al., 2022). The failure to supply financial support for the family not only negatively impacted the quality of life but also resulted in mental health disorders in youth as they were stressed, depressed, and worried, due to the uncertainties (Nakhaie et al., 2022).

Main Theme 2: Resilience

Resilience is another theme that emerged from this scoping review. This theme is the second most important predictor of mental health in the scoping review of Nakhaie et al. (2022). According to Aburn et al. (2016), resilience is a term used to describe and explain the complexities of individual group responses to traumatic and challenging situations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, newcomer youth were put into quarantine upon arrival and after the initial assessments by the Canadian government. In quarantine, newcomer youth exhibited indicators of mental health disorders such as sadness, stress, confusion, isolation, helplessness, nervousness, hopelessness, or depression (Nakhaie et al., 2022). However, newcomer youth became resilient by adapting to these traumatic situations and using their resourcefulness to acculturate in Canada.

Their ability to adapt and become resourceful during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the emergence of two sub-themes, adaptation and resourcefulness, in this review.

Main Theme 3: Social Support

Social support is another main theme in this study. The ecosystem layer in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (1979) supports this theme. This layer encompasses the larger social system, with which the child does not interact directly. These larger social systems include community resources, government policies, and available social services. Due to the restrictions on movement during the COVID-19 pandemic, newcomers had limited access to government immigration services, social services, and community resources that would provide a smooth transition to assimilation and acculturation in Canada. One study conducted in the United States by Neece et al. (2020) reported that the quarantine orders implemented by the government resulted in limited or no access to essential and critical services. Quarantine orders resulted in the youth feeling stress and anxiety heightened, which has an impact on the youth's mental health (Nakhaie et al., 2022). Thus, the sub-theme of assimilation and acculturation emerged from this main theme.

Table 8.0 Table of themes and sub-themes as sourced by the author(s)

THEMES	
Major Themes	Sub-Themes
Economic Support	Food insecurity, Collapse of the Economy
Resilience	Adaptation, Resourcefulness
Social Support	Assimilation and Acculturation

Table 8.0 presents the major themes and sub-themes that form the basis for the current discussion.

4.3 Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic and the mandates implemented to protect citizens drastically changed the daily lives of children and adolescents worldwide. The topic for this research aimed to scope the range and depth of the literature on the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on newcomer children and youth in Canada. This scoping review scoped the nature and scope of research evidence, synthesized it, and mapped the relevant literature evidence that met pre-determined inclusion criteria on this topic. The main conclusion to arise from this review is that there is a glaring lack of research that investigated the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on newcomer children and youth in Canada. However, this scoping review was executed according to Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) five-stage framework and PRISMA-ScR (Tricco).

An extensive search of ten (10) databases produced one hundred and forty-two (143) possible studies to be scoped. An experienced librarian removed fifteen (15) duplicate copies, and another one hundred and sixteen (116) were removed for other reasons, such as studies not done in Canada, and some with a mixed population. After applying the inclusion and exclusion process, one relevant study was scoped. The findings from the one study confirmed that newcomer children and youth experienced negative mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada. The mental health effects include newcomer youths feeling sad, stressed, depressed, isolated, helpless, hopeless, and nervous during the pandemic (Nakhaie et al., 2022). These findings concur with those from other studies from different parts of the world (Tan et al., 2020; Gotlib et al., 2020; Ravens-Siebrer et al., 2021; & Gayatri et al., 2022).

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (1979) provides insight and a better understanding of the challenges that youth faced during the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada. This model provides

an overview and describes how the disruption at any stage within its framework negatively affects youth mental health. The changes in the microsystem describe how quarantine was implemented to reduce the spread of the virus, hampering children's and youth's development by disrupting their immediate relationships or organizations with which they interact. This resulted in newcomer children and youth in Canada experiencing the restriction of movement and a loss of freedom (Luttik et al., 2020), which stresses children.

In addition, family members of newcomer children and youth in Canada had limited access to resources (Benjamine et al., 2021 & Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2019), which caused parental stress, frustration, and depression. This consequently led to newcomer children and youth in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic experiencing anxiety and depression (Nakhaie et al. 2022). Mandated stay-at-home orders during the COVID-19 pandemic exposed children to maltreatment, abuse, increased risk of exploitation, conflicts within the family, media exposure, and extended screen time (Larsen et al., 2022; He et al., 2022; Alanazi et al., 2022 & Senniyappan et al., 2021), which traumatized the newcomer children and youth in Canada, thus negatively impacting their mental health.

The microsystem encompasses the school environment. Mandated stay-at-home orders during the COVID-19 pandemic prevented newcomer children and youth from attending school, reduced physical activities, and exposed them to health problems and suicidal ideation (Campbell et al., 2021; Pieh et al., 2021 & Krause et al., 2022). As a result, this precarious group of children and youth (newcomer children and youth in Canada) during the COVID-19 pandemic did not interact with the school environment (teachers and peers), which plays an integral role in their settlement. This made youths feel isolated (Aggarwal, S., 2021 & Tan et al., 2020),

stressed and frustrated (Kumar, N., & Bhatia, V., 2022), which harmed the mental health of newcomer children and youth during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The changes in the mesosystem describe how parents' non-involvement in society due to quarantine orders negatively affected the youth's mental health in Canada. For example, parents did not interact directly with the school as teaching and learning moved to a virtual space (Ranahan et al. 2024). This harmed children and youth's performance and negatively affected their well-being (Patte et al. 2024). The exosystem layer in the ecological model explains how the inaccessibility to essential services (Benjamin et al. 2020; Hynie et al. 2022) affected the newcomer youth's mental health. The chronosystem in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (1979) describes how the COVID-19 pandemic, a traumatic event, resulted in major life changes in Canada (restrictions on movement, education, access to services, family, culture) and negatively impacted youth's mental health (Nakhaie et al. 2022). Newcomer youth overcame the changes in the chronosystem by becoming resilient through adaptation and resourcefulness. The changes in the layers of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (1979) describe how the themes emerged from the scoping review.

There are three main themes with six sub-themes related to the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on youths in Canada that emerged from the scoping review. The first theme is Economic Support. Food insecurity and the collapse of the economy are two sub-themes that emerged from this main theme. The result from this scoping review shows that food insecurity and a collapsing economy had a great effect on the mental health of newcomer youths in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic. Social distancing and lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic increased food insecurity (Community Food Centres 2020). Due to the restriction of movement as mandated to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus, family members could not

work, and the economy collapsed (Nakhaie et al., 2022 & Freeman et al., 2022), thus resulting in food insecurity. Therefore, the available literature that was scoped supported the themes and sub-themes in this scoping review.

Social support was another theme, with sub-themes assimilation and acculturation, which also emerged from this scoping review. In addition to the restriction of movement and the mandated orders worldwide during the COVID-19 pandemic limited, closed, or changes in the operations of social services making them less accessible and transitioning to online more difficult for newcomers to access (Neece et al., 2020; Salami et al., 2022 Tulli et al., 2020, & Nazish et al., 2021). Newcomer youth in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic may have already had mental health effects during the pre-migratory and post-migratory process. Studies have shown that migration and acculturation can present significant risk factors in children and youth mental health (Ojuronbe, 2023 & Benjamine et al., 2021). The mental health effects that youths face during the migration and acculturation process, along with the difficulties or inability to access social services, made the transition difficult to assimilate and acculturate in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic. This resulted in additional stress, anxiety, nervousness, and depression in youths (Nakhaie et al., 2022). These mental health effects of migration and settlement identified in the literature on newcomer youth in Canada thus align with the findings of the one study that met the scoping review criteria. However, it was not made clear in the article whether the effects were more (or less) severe during the COVID-19 restrictions.

On facing the inevitability and traumatic circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, newcomer youths became resilient by adapting and becoming resourceful. They became resilient by learning new strategies and using the available resources to cope with the changes caused by the pandemic. Resilience was the second most important predictor of mental health in the article

scope (Nakhaie et al. 2022). This constitutes resilience as a main theme, with adaptation and resourcefulness being the sub-themes. Newcomer youth adapted and used the available resources, such as the internet and online schooling, to cope with the pandemic and acculturate in the society (Ji & Charles, 2020).

4.6 Gaps in Literature

This research identifies several gaps. According to Robinson et al. (2011), a research gap is a topic or an area for which missing or inadequate information limits the ability of reviewers to reach a conclusion for a given question. Although Canada is known to be the global leader in refugee resettlement (UNHCR, 2020), little research has been done on the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on newcomer children and youth in Canada. A lack of research on this topic and a unique sample in this scoping review results in a classical literature gap and a knowledge gap. Arteaga et al. (2024) stated that knowledge gaps recognize the deficit in knowledge on a research topic. Hence, there is a deficit in knowledge on this topic in Canada. Another gap that exists in this scoping review is the methodological gap. A population gap also exists. In this scoping review, these gaps exist because the phenomenon is new, and virtually no research has been conducted on this topic.

Apart from the phenomenon being new, some other factors may have contributed to a lack of research on this topic in the English-speaking territories in Canada. One such factor is the quarantine orders implemented by the Canadian government during the COVID-19 pandemic. Quarantine orders in Canada resulted in limited or a lack of accessibility to essential services (Benjamin et al., 2021) for immigrant families. Furthermore, mental health services rapidly transitioned to virtual care, online, and outreach resources (Hynie et al., 2022). The rapid changes in the services caused by the COVID-19 pandemic made it even more difficult for

newcomer children and youth's mental health to be properly assessed by the relevant stakeholders upon arrival or for newcomer parents to report or seek assistance based on changes in their children's and youth's behavioural patterns. The lack of this vital information prevented the relevant stakeholders from identifying the needs of service required by this group, making referrals to the appropriate departments, which would prompt further investigations, and the need for data collection.

Additionally, several other factors that existed in Canada before the COVID-19 pandemic may contribute to the gaps in this scoping review. One such factor is that some newcomer children and youth are marginalized and fall into minority groups (Francis et al., 2016 & Etowa et al., 2021). As a result, little or no attention or focus is placed on their needs, including their mental health, by service providers, policymakers, and other stakeholders. Thus, identifying and understanding their needs and challenges is still unclear. Also, immigrant and refugee children face challenges in navigating the Canadian health system, face inequities in social determinants of health, and decreased access to primary and community mental health services (Kalich et al., 2016; Benjamine et al., 2021). These challenges deter newcomers from seeking assistance from the relevant services and making their needs known.

In addition, it is a fact that there is a language and cultural barrier between newcomers and Canadians (Besier, 2006; Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2011). This barrier existed before, during, and even after the pandemic (Fong et al., 2022; Dagher et al., 2022; Pandey et al., 2022). This barrier may have contributed to a lack of research on this phenomenon due to communication difficulties. Additionally, the translation cost and the time it will take are deterrents for studying these groups. Moreover, due to structural racism and systematic inequality that exist in Canada with newcomer families (Tuyisenge et al., 2021; Rishworth et al.,

2024), priority in services is not given to meet the needs of this group. Also, the pandemic had a disproportionate negative impact on black and racialized people in Canada (Mensah & Williams, 2022; Man et al., 2024 & Rishworth et al., 2024). Despite this finding, there is no federal mandate to collect these data. Given that all these known factors exist in Canada that affect newcomer children and youth negatively, the need for investigation into their mental health effects may not be a priority. This results in the gaps in the literature.

4.4 Strengths

This comprehensive review captures all the available studies regarding the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on newcomer children and youth in Canada. A strength of this study is the use of the scoping review framework described by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) as the methodological approach. This methodological approach determined the nature and scope of the research evidence, clarified concepts, and identified the knowledge gaps on this topic. Another strength of this scoping review is that it highlighted the fact that there is a glaring lack of studies on the mental health effects the COVID-19 pandemic had on newcomer children and youth in Canada. In addition, Munn (2018) propounds that the primary goal of a scoping review is to identify knowledge gaps, scope a body of literature, clarify concepts, or investigate research. Another strength of this study was using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to report the findings. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines improved the clarity, transparency, and quality value by providing a clear and detailed account of this review process. Thus, the scoping review framework by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) and the use of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines in this review establishes the fact that the research evidence concerning this topic is incipient.

Furthermore, it identified the gaps in existing literature, and this finding should be used to enhance future studies on this under-researched topic in Canada.

4.5 Limitations

There are several limitations in this scoping review, thus providing opportunities for further research. One limitation was that the available literature scope concentrated on one age range (14-25) of the sample aimed at this research. Therefore, a comprehensive scoping review of the literature was not possible to identify the categories of the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on newcomer children and youth in Canada. Another limitation is that the sample of this review was specific and unique. The strict nature of the search terms might have prevented searches on the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigrant families overall, which could have resulted in studies that included newcomer children and youth. The third limitation of this research is that scoping reviews do not aim to provide recommendations for clinical practice. As a result, the results from this review were not evidence of clinical guidelines. A lack of evidence in clinical guidelines results in a lack of data to draw reliable and valid conclusive evidence. This results in subjective opinions rather than providing optimal patient care. Additionally, Canada is a bilingual country where English and French are the two official languages. French literature was not researched. Therefore, another limitation is that only literature in English was scoped. Hence, there could be studies in the French language that could add to a wider body of literature for scoping for this review.

4.7 Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the center stage the critical importance of addressing children's and youth's mental health during a global crisis. This present study found that there is a glaring lack of research on the mental health effects on newcomer children and

youth in Canada. Mental health effects that impact children and youths are significant and should be of tremendous concern to policymakers and practitioners globally. The Federal Government, along with other mental health policymakers, needs to invest in accessible, responsive, and adequate social services for newcomer children and youth in Canada to mitigate the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, future pandemics, and any other global crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the unpreparedness for a pandemic that required mandated measures such as quarantine as a protective barrier. Hence, a mental health framework should be developed for newcomer children and youth in Canada for organizations such as social services sectors, schools, and churches. Additionally, accessing mental health services would be vital for newcomer children and youth in Canada by increasing access to mental health services and integrating mental health care into medical settings that would be ideal to provide front-line and comprehensive care. Finally, to further investigate the mental health effects on newcomer children in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic, future studies should build on this study to curtail such effects on this precarious population for future pandemics.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Keywords:

Immigrants OR Newcomers OR Migrants OR Immigrants OR Immigration OR Migration OR
Transients OR Refugees OR Transnational

AND

Child OR Children OR Adolescents OR Youths OR Infants OR Toddlers OR Preschool OR
Young Adults

AND

Mental Health OR Mental Illness OR Disease OR Well-Being OR Illness OR Wellness

AND

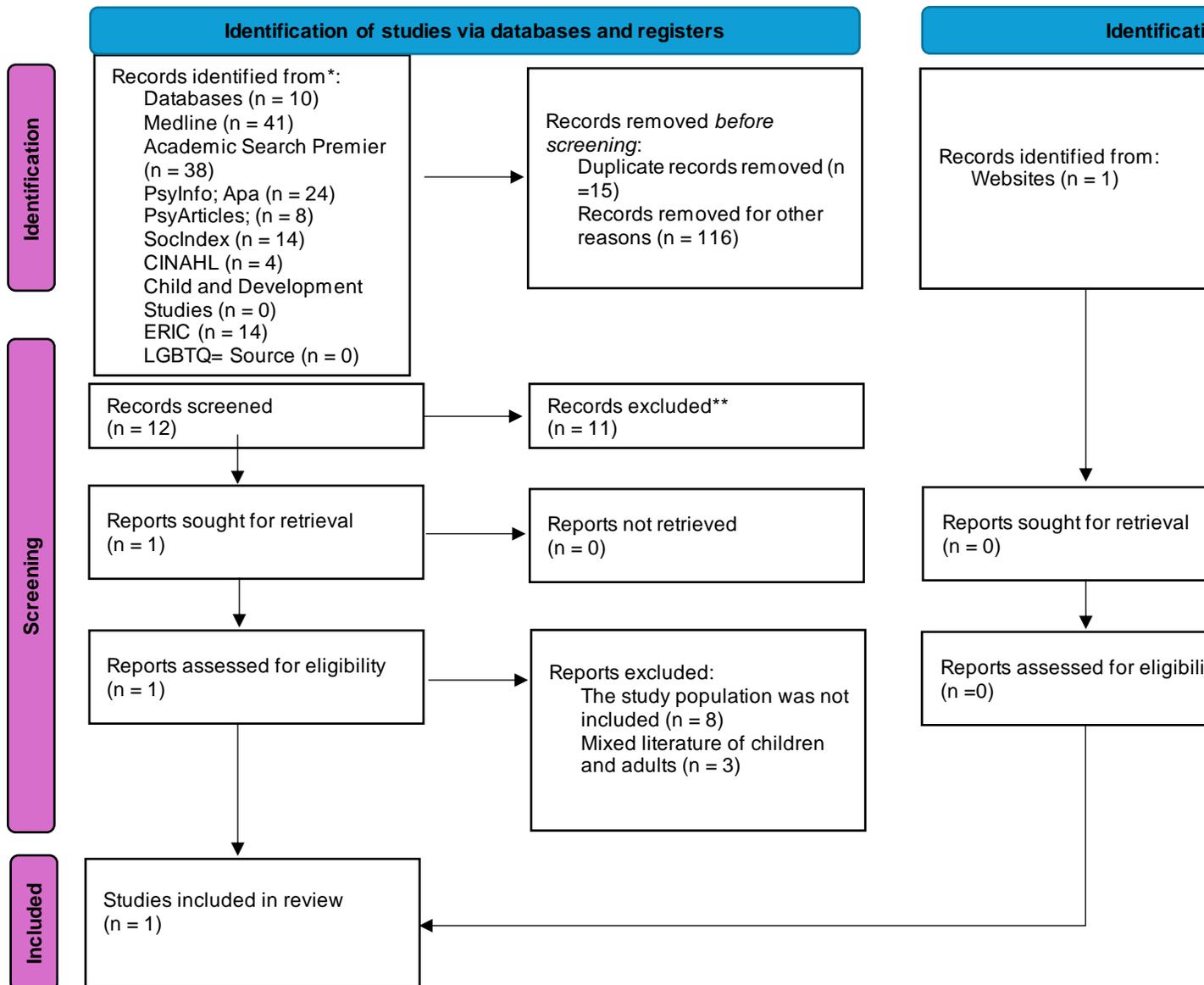
Canada OR Alberta, OR British Columbia, OR Manitoba, OR New Brunswick, OR
Newfoundland and Labrador, OR Nova Scotia, OR Ontario, OR Prince Edward Island, OR
Quebec, OR Saskatchewan OR Yukon OR Northwest Territories.

AND

COVID-19 OR COVID-19 Pandemic

Appendix B: PRISMA Flow Chart

Screening the Mental Health Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Newcomer Children and Youth in Canada: A Scoping Review



Appendix C: Search Strategy

