

A scoping review of the intergenerational effects of the Tutsi Genocide in Rwanda

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Introduction

- Between April 6 to July 16, 1994, over 1,000,000 Tutsis were killed in the Rwandan genocide. 150,000-200,000 women were also raped during this time.²
- The survivors of the Rwandan genocide witnessed and experienced horrific, traumatic events during this time, leading to increased long-term trauma, mental health and psychological conditions.³
- Effects of these traumatic events may be intergenerationally transmitted and endured for generations, affecting the descendant generations of those initially victimized.¹
- Over the last two decades, Rwanda has put in impressive efforts that aim to foster reconciliation, build long-term peace and address mental health issues.⁴



A young Rwandan boy stands before a mass grave in 1994.
Dufka, C. (2019). A young Rwandan stares at bodies in a mass grave July 20, 1994. Retrieved September, 2020, from <https://www.ncronline.org/print/news/opinion/rwanda-memoir-recounts-couples-harrowing-tale>

Study Aims

- Aim 1:** Conduct a scoping review of the literature → gain an understanding of the intergenerational effects of the genocide
- Aim 2:** Develop themes from the literature → identify and influence areas for further research
- Aim 3:** Assess the mental health status and needs in Rwanda → respond efficiently to the population's needs and inform capacity building, interventions, and policy in partnership with Health Builders

Methods

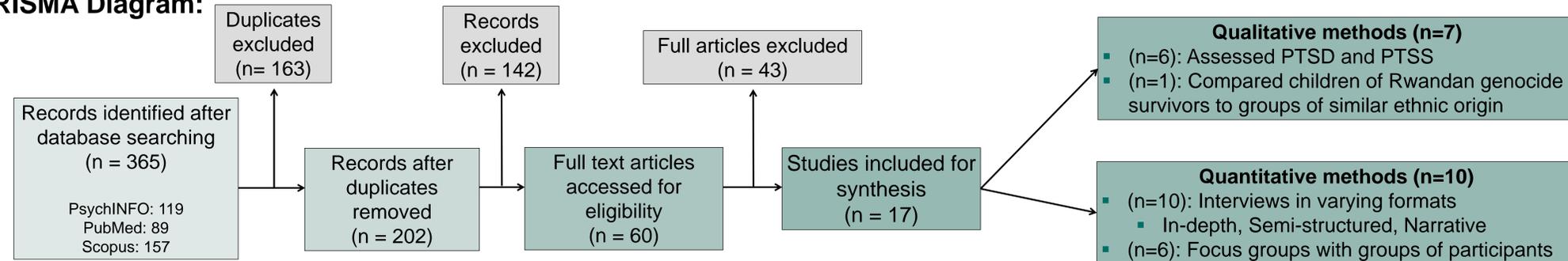
- Scoping review of PsychINFO, PubMed, and Scopus.
- 2 searches were performed using the following terms:
 - Rwanda* and Genocid* and Mental Health or Mental disorder* or PTSD or Post traumatic stress disorder or post trauma* or stress and trauma related disorders
 - Rwanda* and Intergeneration*
- Articles were assessed for relevance and themes were analyzed.

References

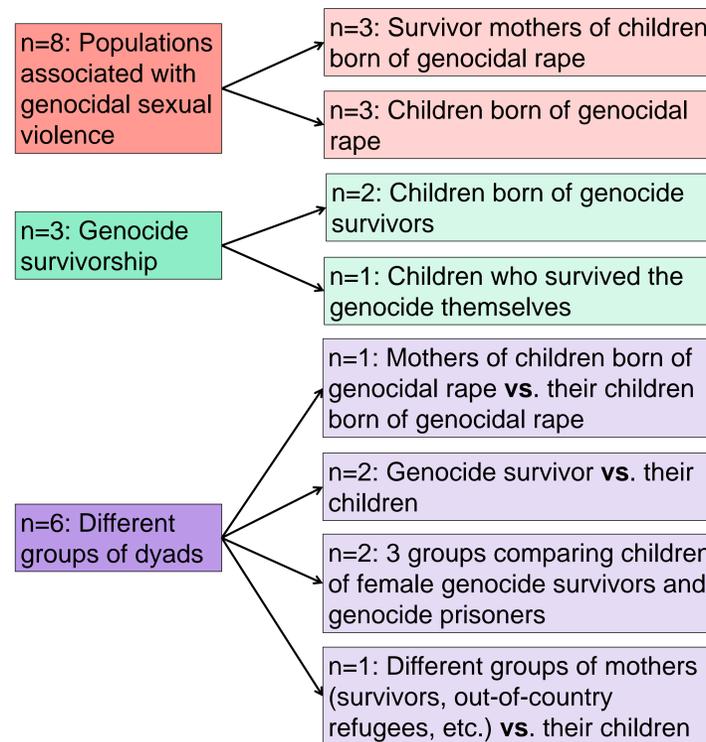
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 2: Outreach Programme on the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda and the United Nations. (n.d.). Retrieved September, 2020, from <https://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/historical-background.shtml>
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 4: The Justice and Reconciliation Process in Rwanda. (2012). Retrieved September, 2020, from <https://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/pdf/bgjustice.pdf>

Results

PRISMA Diagram:



Themes of qualitative studies:



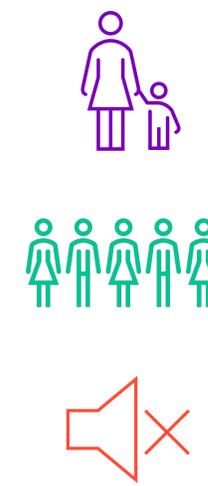
Major Concepts:

Quantitative:

- Statistically significant levels of PTSD in descendant generations.
 - Probability of developing PTSD was related to parental exposure to trauma
- Older children have a higher symptom risk than younger descendants
 - Birth before the war is a critical factor in PTSD development
- Children's increased exposure to traumatic stressors, maltreatment, and family violence were all noted as mechanisms of trauma transmission



Qualitative:



- Children born of genocidal rape:**
 - Difficult, complex relationships with their family members, especially their mother
 - Victims of shame, internalized stigma, rejection, and both verbal and physical abuse
 - Struggle to find clear, full information about their father's identity → challenging identity development
- Both societal and socioeconomic marginalization is common for children in the post-genocide era.**
 - At risk for abuse, poverty, neglect, trauma, and an inability to access education
 - Marginalization is experienced even greater in the population of children born of genocidal rape who are seen as "little killers," an "eternal reminder of grief," and "children of hate" amongst society
- The culture of silence and denial amongst family members and society is challenging to descendants who strive to understand genocide and their family's experience.**
 - Damaging and hindering to identity development among children

Conclusion

- The descendant populations of survivors of the Rwandan genocide continue to be impacted by traumatic events that occurred and their aftermath.
- Thematically, the literature heavily focused on children born of genocidal rape, their experiences, and their relationships with their family and society.
- Next steps:**
 - This recognition of trauma transmission amongst descendant populations in Rwanda must be met with appropriate interventions to address and meet these needs.
 - Future studies should consider evaluating sub-populations in Rwanda beyond children born of genocidal rape. Including...
 - Children born of parents who experienced the genocide
 - Grandchildren of people who directly experienced the genocide
 - Children born of parents who were born of genocidal rape

Acknowledgments