

Barriers and Facilitators in Accessing Orthotic and Prosthetic Services: A Qualitative Systematic Review

Ahmadi M¹, Babaee T², Bagheripour B³, Pezham H⁴

1. Queen Margaret University, United Kingdom, 2. University of Medical Sciences, Iran, 3,4. Sahlgrenska University Hospital, Sweden



Introduction & Aim

Access to rehabilitation services is crucial for preventing loss of functional abilities in high-risk groups, with orthotic and prosthetic services requiring effective communication and follow-up for optimal function(1). There are some barriers to accessing these services which can lead to various psychosocial issues, including mental health challenges and reduced motivation(2-3).

This systematic review investigates the obstacles, challenges, and enabling factors in accessing prosthetic and orthotic services to identify key barriers and solutions for better patient outcomes.

Method

Search Strategy



Databases: followed the PRISMA 2021 guidelines; PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Cochrane Library

Data Extraction & Quality Assessment



Framework: PICOS
Quality Assessment: CASP

Study Selection



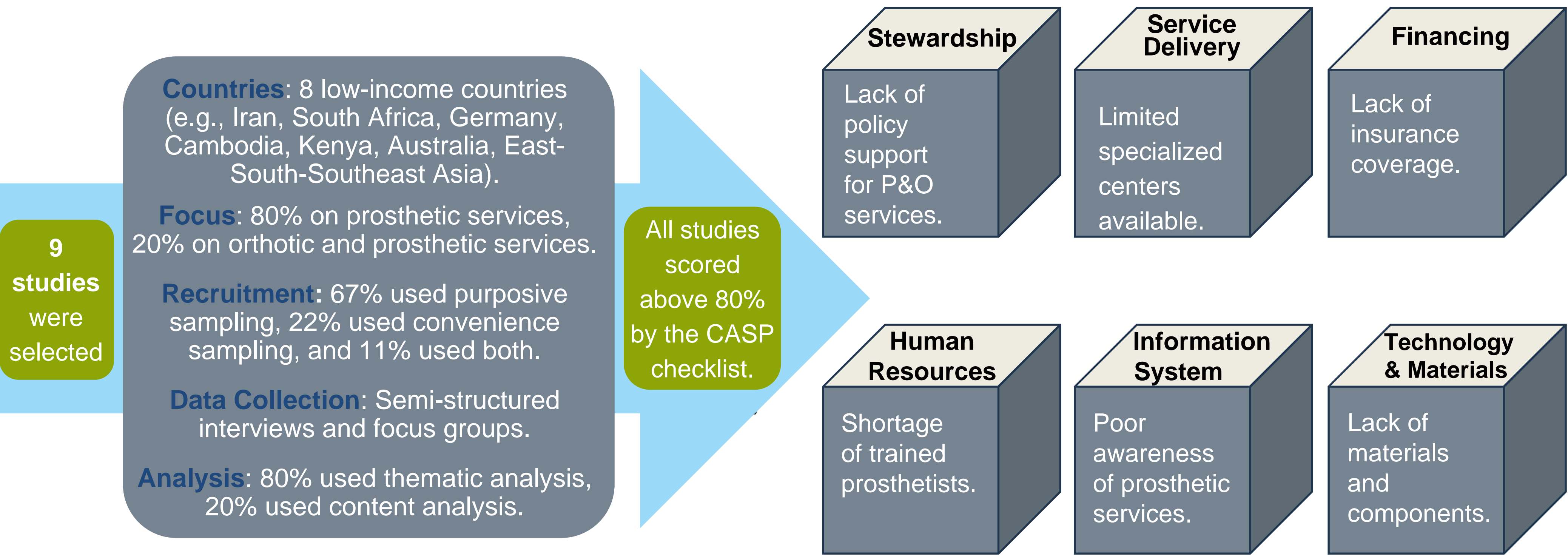
Included: Qualitative/mixed-methods studies
Screening: Two independent reviewers, a third reviewer for conflicts

Data Synthesis



Method: Thematic analysis
Framework: WHO's 6-block framework

Results



Discussion

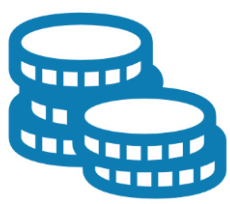
□ Barriers ✓ Facilitators



- Lack of clear policies and governance
- Dependence on NGOs for funding
- ✓ Legislative reforms (e.g., German Participation Act)
- ✓ Prosthetists addressing psychosocial needs



- Few specialized centres, long distances
- Poor insurance coordination
- ✓ Supportive relationships with family and peers
- ✓ Child-friendly, engaging prosthetic environments



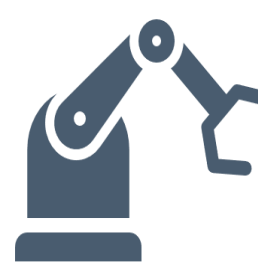
- Unemployment and financial instability
- Rising prosthetics costs causing insurer conflicts
- ✓ Social workers securing financial aid
- ✓ NGO and charity involvement



- Shortage of trained prosthetists (esp. women)
- Staff burnout and bureaucratic employment issues
- ✓ Patient-centred care models
- ✓ Investment in training and assistive tech



- Poor awareness of services
- Lack of structured communication
- ✓ Structured follow-up and reminders
- ✓ Improved data tracking of service outcomes



- Overreliance on imports
- Basic/unsuitable technologies
- ✓ Telehealth for remote service access
- ✓ Specialised telehealth training for clinics

Conclusion

Improving access to orthotic and prosthetic services requires:

Stronger policies and infrastructure

Increased funding and trained personnel

Support for psychosocial and economic needs

References

1. Boldrini et al. 2020. Eur J Phys Rehabil Med.
2. Nabizadeh et al. 2024. Prosthet Orthot Int.
3. Ennion et al. 2019. Prosthet Orthot Int.
4. Dillon et al. 2024. Disabil Rehabil.

