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RETURNING TO WORK AFTER CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE: A REVIEW OF COMMON AND STROKE-SPECIFIC PREDICTORS

E-POSTER HIGHLIGHTS: REHABILITATION

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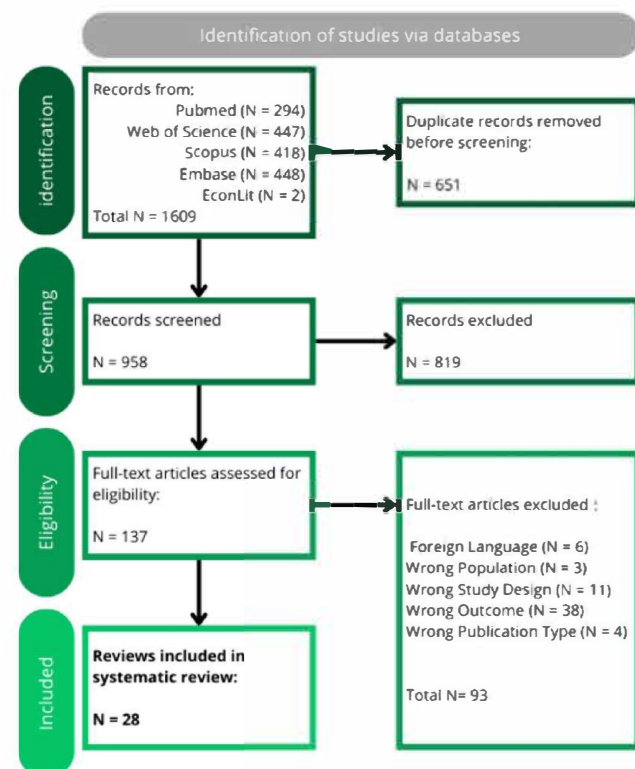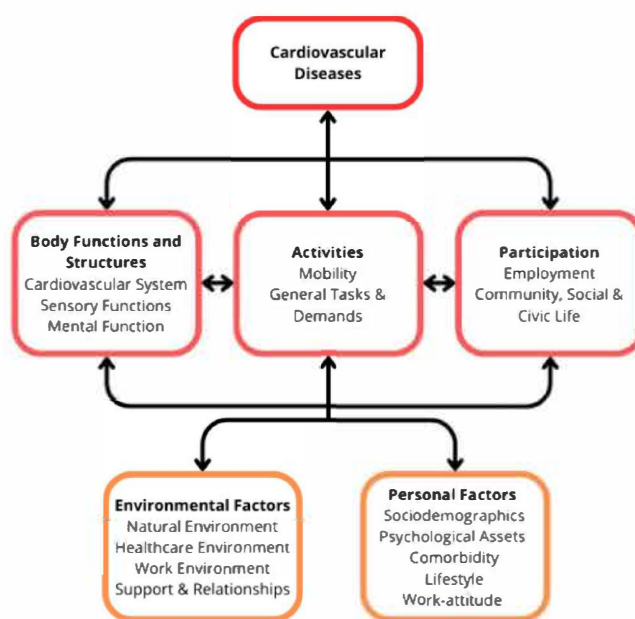
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Background and Aims: Returning to work (RTW) after cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a complex process that impacts both individual wellbeing and societal productivity. While most reviews on RTW predictors focus on a single diagnosis, recurring medical, psychosocial, and work-related factors suggest the presence of common predictors across CVDs. This systematic review synthesizes predictors of RTW across acute coronary syndrome (ACS), coronary artery disease (CAD), heart failure (HF), and stroke using the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) framework.

Methods: Following PRISMA guidelines, a systematic review of systematic reviews was conducted. A total of 28 reviews were included, with predictors categorized using the ICF framework (Body Structures, - Functions, Activities, Participation, Personal- and Environmental factors). Methodological quality was assessed using the AMSTAR-2 tool.

Results: Both common and disease-specific predictors were identified. Across all CVDs, RTW outcomes were strongly influenced by functional capacity, psychological well-being, job content, and social support. For stroke, environmental factors played a particularly crucial role. Workplace characteristics, employment policies, healthcare accessibility, and social participation were key influences, with cognitive and mobility impairments further complicating reintegration.

Conclusions: Optimizing RTW outcomes requires a comprehensive approach addressing both common and disease-specific barriers. Workplace adaptations and a personalized, multidisciplinary, integrated rehabilitation pathway—involving patients, families, employers, and healthcare providers—along with clear communication and coordination between these stakeholders, is essential for successful reintegration. Future research should assess targeted interventions and explore how these predictors apply across other conditions to refine vocational rehabilitation strategies.
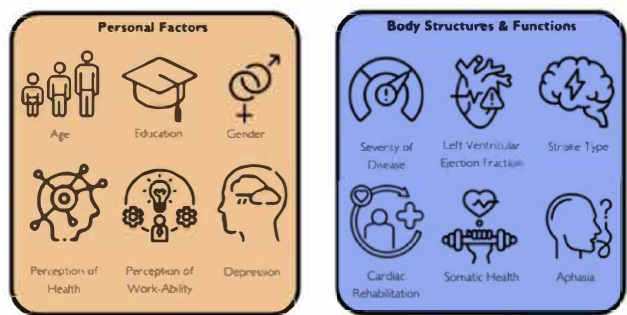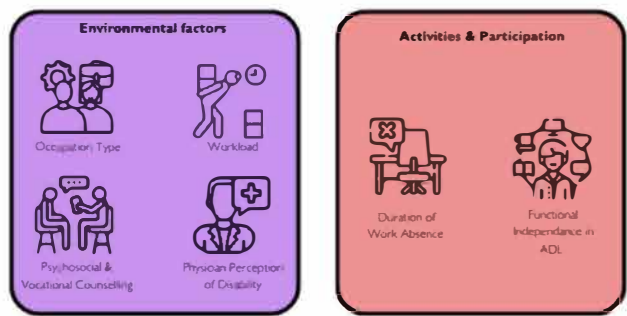
Abbreviations: ADL, Activities of Daily Living; RTW, Return To Work