

**A mixed studies systematic review on the health and wellbeing effects, and underlying mechanisms, of online support groups for chronic conditions:
Supplementary Tables**

Table 1: PRISMA Checklist

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist item	Location where item is reported
TITLE			
Title	1	Identify the report as a systematic review.	Title page
ABSTRACT			
Abstract	2	See the PRISMA 2020 for Abstracts checklist.	Abstract
INTRODUCTION			
Rationale	3	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of existing knowledge.	Introduction
Objectives	4	Provide an explicit statement of the objective(s) or question(s) the review addresses.	“Current Study”
METHODS			
Eligibility criteria	5	Specify the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the review and how studies were grouped for the syntheses.	“Eligibility criteria” “Synthesis”
Information sources	6	Specify all databases, registers, websites, organisations, reference lists and other sources searched or consulted to identify studies. Specify the date when each source was last searched or consulted.	“Search criteria”
Search strategy	7	Present the full search strategies for all databases, registers and websites, including any filters and limits used.	Supplementary Tables 2-6
Selection process	8	Specify the methods used to decide whether a study met the inclusion criteria of the review, including how many reviewers screened each record and each report retrieved, whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	“Study selection”
Data collection process	9	Specify the methods used to collect data from reports, including how many reviewers collected data from each report, whether they worked independently, any processes for obtaining or confirming data from study investigators, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	“Data extraction”
Data items	10a	List and define all outcomes for which data were sought. Specify whether all results that were compatible with each outcome domain in each study were sought (e.g. for all measures, time points, analyses), and if not, the methods used to decide which results to collect.	“Data extraction”
	10b	List and define all other variables for which data were sought (e.g. participant and intervention characteristics, funding sources). Describe any assumptions made about any missing or unclear information.	“Data extraction”
Study risk of bias assessment	11	Specify the methods used to assess risk of bias in the included studies, including details of the tool(s) used, how many reviewers assessed each study and whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	“Quality assessment”
Effect measures	12	Specify for each outcome the effect measure(s) (e.g. risk ratio, mean difference) used in the synthesis or presentation of results.	N/A
Synthesis methods	13a	Describe the processes used to decide which studies were eligible for each synthesis (e.g. tabulating the study intervention characteristics and comparing against the planned groups for each synthesis (item #5)).	“Study selection”
	13b	Describe any methods required to prepare the data for presentation or synthesis, such as handling of missing summary statistics, or data conversions.	“Data extraction and synthesis”
	13c	Describe any methods used to tabulate or visually display results of individual studies and syntheses.	N/A

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist item	Location where item is reported
	13d	Describe any methods used to synthesize results and provide a rationale for the choice(s). If meta-analysis was performed, describe the model(s), method(s) to identify the presence and extent of statistical heterogeneity, and software package(s) used.	"Data extraction and synthesis"
	13e	Describe any methods used to explore possible causes of heterogeneity among study results (e.g. subgroup analysis, meta-regression).	N/A
	13f	Describe any sensitivity analyses conducted to assess robustness of the synthesized results.	N/A
Reporting bias assessment	14	Describe any methods used to assess risk of bias due to missing results in a synthesis (arising from reporting biases).	N/A
Certainty assessment	15	Describe any methods used to assess certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for an outcome.	N/A
RESULTS			
Study selection	16a	Describe the results of the search and selection process, from the number of records identified in the search to the number of studies included in the review, ideally using a flow diagram.	Figure 1
	16b	Cite studies that might appear to meet the inclusion criteria, but which were excluded, and explain why they were excluded.	Supplementary Table 7
Study characteristics	17	Cite each included study and present its characteristics.	Table 2
Risk of bias in studies	18	Present assessments of risk of bias for each included study.	Supplementary Tables 8-12
Results of individual studies	19	For all outcomes, present, for each study: (a) summary statistics for each group (where appropriate) and (b) an effect estimate and its precision (e.g. confidence/credible interval), ideally using structured tables or plots.	N/A
Results of syntheses	20a	For each synthesis, briefly summarise the characteristics and risk of bias among contributing studies.	Results
	20b	Present results of all statistical syntheses conducted. If meta-analysis was done, present for each the summary estimate and its precision (e.g. confidence/credible interval) and measures of statistical heterogeneity. If comparing groups, describe the direction of the effect.	N/A
	20c	Present results of all investigations of possible causes of heterogeneity among study results.	N/A
	20d	Present results of all sensitivity analyses conducted to assess the robustness of the synthesized results.	N/A
Reporting biases	21	Present assessments of risk of bias due to missing results (arising from reporting biases) for each synthesis assessed.	N/A
Certainty of evidence	22	Present assessments of certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for each outcome assessed.	N/A
DISCUSSION			
Discussion	23a	Provide a general interpretation of the results in the context of other evidence.	Discussion
	23b	Discuss any limitations of the evidence included in the review.	"Limitations"
	23c	Discuss any limitations of the review processes used.	"Limitations"
	23d	Discuss implications of the results for practice, policy, and future research.	"Implications"
OTHER INFORMATION			
Registration and protocol	24a	Provide registration information for the review, including register name and registration number, or state that the review was not registered.	"Protocol and registration"
	24b	Indicate where the review protocol can be accessed, or state that a protocol was not prepared.	"Protocol and registration"
	24c	Describe and explain any amendments to information provided at registration or in the protocol.	"Protocol and registration"
Support	25	Describe sources of financial or non-financial support for the review, and the role of the funders or sponsors in the review.	Abstract and Acknowledgements

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist item	Location where item is reported
Competing interests	26	Declare any competing interests of review authors.	"Competing interests"
Availability of data, code and other materials	27	Report which of the following are publicly available and where they can be found: template data collection forms; data extracted from included studies; data used for all analyses; analytic code; any other materials used in the review.	"Data availability"

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Tables 2-7: Full search strategy

Tables 2-7 display the full search strategy for each database and grey literature search including the number of records identified for each search term. All searches were based on the study population (individuals with a Chronic Condition) and study intervention (online support group).

The online platform Ovid was used to search Embase, Medline and PsycInfo. Free text search items were searched in the abstract and title for Embase, Medline and PsycInfo (represented by '.ab.ti' in the search terms) and in the topic for Web of Science, which included title, abstract, author keywords and keywords plus. Search items beginning with 'exp' refer to database controlled vocabulary identified in relation to the words 'chronic condition' and 'online support group'. Medline did not have controlled vocabulary in relation to 'online support group'.

Table 2: search terms for Embase

Embase 1974 to September 10, 2024		
Concept	Number	Query
Population (Individuals with a Chronic Condition)	1	(chronic adj illness*).ab,ti.
	2	(chronic adj disease*).ab,ti.
	3	(chronic adj condition*).ab,ti.
	4	(chronic adj infection*).ab,ti.
	5	(chronic adj health*).ab,ti.
	6	(chronic adj respiratory*).ab,ti.
	7	(chronic adj neurologic*).ab,ti.
	8	(chronic adj pain*).ab,ti.
	9	(chronic adj fatigue*).ab,ti.
	10	(long term adj2 condition*).ab,ti.
	11	"diabetes".ab,ti.
	12	"hypertension".ab,ti.
	13	"angina".ab,ti.
	14	"cardiovascular disease".ab,ti.
	15	"chronic obstructive pulmonary disease".ab,ti.
	16	"multiple sclerosis".ab,ti.
	17	"arthritis".ab,ti.
	18	"cancer".ab,ti.
	19	"irritable bowel syndrom*".ab,ti.
	20	"myalgic encephalomyelitis".ab,ti.
	21	"CFS".ab,ti.
	22	"ME/CFS".ab,ti.
	23	"long covid".ab,ti.
	24	"coronary heart disease".ab,ti.

25	"cystic fibrosis".ab,ti.
26	"ulcerative colitis".ab,ti.
27	"chronic kidney disease".ab,ti.
28	"haemophilia".ab,ti.
29	"lupus".ab,ti.
30	"HIV".ab,ti.
31	"Crohn's disease".ab,ti.
32	"sickle cell anemia".ab,ti.
33	"fibromyalgia".ab,ti.
34	"inflammatory bowel disease".ab,ti.
35	"systemic sclerosis".ab,ti.
36	exp chronic active hepatitis/
37	exp chronic allograft nephropathy/
38	exp chronic arthritis/
39	exp chronic bronchitis/
40	exp chronic cluster headache/
41	exp chronic constipation/
42	exp chronic cough/
43	exp chronic depression/
44	exp chronic disease/
45	exp chronic fatigue syndrome/
46	exp chronic graft versus host disease/
47	exp chronic granulomatous disease/
48	exp chronic hepatitis B/
49	exp chronic hepatitis C/
50	exp chronic infection/
51	exp chronic inflammation/
52	exp chronic inflammatory pain/

53	exp chronic intermittent hypoxia/
54	exp "chronic kidney disease-mineral and bone disorder"/
55	exp chronic kidney failure/
56	exp chronic liver disease/
57	exp chronic liver failure/
58	exp chronic lung disease/
59	exp chronic liver failure/
60	exp chronic low grade inflammation/
61	exp chronic lung disease/
62	exp chronic myeloid leukemia/
63	exp chronic lymphatic leukemia/
64	exp chronic myelomonocytic leukemia/
65	exp chronic neutrophilic leukemia/
66	exp chronic obstructive lung disease/
67	exp chronic otitis media/
68	exp chronic pain/
69	exp chronic pancreatitis/
70	exp chronic periodontitis/
71	exp chronic progressive external ophthalmoplegia/
72	exp chronic prostatitis/
73	exp chronic pulmonary aspergillosis/
74	exp multiple chronic conditions/
75	exp chronic viral hepatitis/
76	exp chronic vein insufficiency/
77	exp chronic urticaria/
78	exp chronic traumatic encephalopathy/
79	exp chronic thromboembolic pulmonary hypertension/
80	exp chronic stress/

Intervention (Online support group)	81	exp chronic sinusitis/
	82	exp chronic rhinosinusitis/
	83	exp chronic respiratory tract disease/
	84	exp chronic respiratory failure/
	85	"online support group".ab,ti.
	86	"online peer support".ab,ti.
	87	"online social support".ab,ti.
	88	(virtual adj3 group*).ab,ti.
	89	(virtual adj3 communit*).ab,ti.
	90	(virtual adj3 support*).ab,ti.
	91	(online adj3 group*).ab,ti.
	92	(online adj3 communit*).ab,ti.
	93	(online adj3 support*).ab,ti.
	94	(web adj4 group*).ab,ti.
	95	(internet adj4 communit*).ab,ti.
	96	(internet adj4 support*).ab,ti.
	97	(computer mediated adj3 group*).ab,ti.
	98	(computer mediated adj3 communit*).ab,ti.
	99	(computer mediated adj3 support*).ab,ti.
	100	(social media adj3 group*).ab,ti.
	101	(social media adj3 support*).ab,ti.
	102	(Facebook adj3 support*).ab,ti.
	103	"discussion forum*".ab,ti.
	104	"discussion fora".ab,ti.
	105	"bulletin board*".ab,ti.
	106	"Reddit".ab,ti.
	107	"chat room".ab,ti.
	108	"message board*".ab,ti.

	109	exp online support group/
Population Combination	110	1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 or 16 or 17 or 18 or 19 or 20 or 21 or 22 or 23 or 24 or 25 or 26 or 27 or 28 or 29 or 30 or 31 or 32 or 33 or 34 or 35 or 36 or 37 or 38 or 39 or 40 or 41 or 42 or 43 or 44 or 45 or 46 or 47 or 48 or 49 or 50 or 51 or 52 or 53 or 54 or 55 or 56 or 57 or 58 or 59 or 60 or 61 or 62 or 63 or 64 or 65 or 66 or 67 or 68 or 69 or 70 or 71 or 72 or 73 or 74 or 75 or 76 or 77 or 78 or 79 or 80 or 81 or 82 or 83 or 84
Intervention Combination	110	85 or 86 or 87 or 88 or 89 or 90 or 91 or 92 or 93 or 94 or 94 or 96 or 97 or 98 or 99 or 100 or 101 or 102 or 103 or 104 or 105 or 106 or 107 or 108 or 109
Population AND Intervention Combination	111	109 and 110

Table 3: Search terms for Medline

Ovid MEDLINE® ALL 1946 to September 10, 2024		
Concept	Search Number	Query
Population (Individuals with a Chronic Condition)	1	(chronic adj illness*).ab,ti.
	2	(chronic adj disease*).ab,ti.
	3	(chronic adj condition*).ab,ti.
	4	(chronic adj infection*).ab,ti.
	5	(chronic adj health*).ab,ti.
	6	(chronic adj respiratory*).ab,ti.
	7	(chronic adj neurologic*).ab,ti.
	8	(chronic adj pain*).ab,ti.
	9	(chronic adj fatigue*).ab,ti.
	10	(long term adj2 condition*).ab,ti.
	11	"diabetes".ab,ti.
	12	"hypertension".ab,ti.
	13	"angina".ab,ti.
	14	"cardiovascular disease".ab,ti.
	15	"chronic obstructive pulmonary disease".ab,ti.
	16	"multiple sclerosis".ab,ti.
	17	"arthritis".ab,ti.
	18	"cancer".ab,ti.
	19	"irritable bowel syndrom*".ab,ti.
	20	"myalgic encephalomyelitis".ab,ti.
	21	"CFS".ab,ti.
	22	"ME/CFS".ab,ti.
	23	"long covid".ab,ti.

24	"coronary heart disease".ab,ti.
25	"cystic fibrosis".ab,ti.
26	"ulcerative colitis".ab,ti.
27	"chronic kidney disease".ab,ti.
28	"haemophilia".ab,ti.
29	"lupus".ab,ti.
30	"HIV".ab,ti.
31	"Crohn's disease".ab,ti.
32	"sickle cell anemia".ab,ti.
33	"fibromyalgia".ab,ti.
34	"inflammatory bowel disease".ab,ti.
35	"systemic sclerosis".ab,ti.
36	exp Chronic Disease/
37	exp "Chronic Kidney Disease-Mineral and Bone Disorder"/
38	exp Chronic Limb-Threatening Ischemia/
39	exp Chronic Pain/
40	exp Chronic Periodontitis/
41	exp Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy/
42	exp Chronic Urticaria/
43	exp Fatigue Syndrome, Chronic/
44	exp Granulomatous Disease, Chronic/
45	exp Hepatitis B, Chronic/
46	exp Hepatitis C, Chronic/
47	exp Hepatitis, Chronic/
48	exp Hepatitis D, Chronic/
49	exp Kidney Failure, Chronic/
50	exp Leukemia, Lymphocytic, Chronic, B-Cell/
51	exp Leukemia, Myelogenous, Chronic, BCR-ABL Positive/

Intervention (Online support group)	52	exp Leukemia, Myeloid, Chronic-Phase/
	53	exp Leukemia, Myelomonocytic, Chronic/
	54	exp Multiple Chronic Conditions/
	55	exp Multiple Sclerosis, Chronic Progressive/
	56	exp Renal Insufficiency, Chronic/
	57	exp Pancreatitis, Chronic/
	58	exp Polyradiculoneuropathy, Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating/
	59	exp Pulmonary Disease, Chronic Obstructive/
	60	"online support group".ab,ti.
	61	"online peer support".ab,ti.
	62	"online social support".ab,ti.
	63	(virtual adj3 group*).ab,ti.
	64	(virtual adj3 communit*).ab,ti.
	65	(virtual adj3 support*).ab,ti.
	66	(online adj3 group*).ab,ti.
	67	(online adj3 communit*).ab,ti.
	68	(online adj3 support*).ab,ti.
	69	(web adj4 group*).ab,ti.
	70	(web adj4 communit*).ab,ti.
	71	(internet adj4 communit*).ab,ti.
	72	(internet adj4 support*).ab,ti.
	73	(computer mediated adj3 group*).ab,ti.
	74	(computer mediated adj3 communit*).ab,ti.
	75	(computer mediated adj3 support*).ab,ti.
	76	(social media adj3 group*).ab,ti.
	77	(social media adj3 support*).ab,ti.
	78	(Facebook adj3 support*).ab,ti.
	79	"discussion forum*".ab,ti.

	80	"discussion fora".ab,ti.
	81	"bulletin board*".ab,ti.
	82	"Reddit".ab,ti.
	83	"chat room".ab,ti.
	84	"message board*".ab,ti.
Population Combination	85	1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 or 16 or 17 or 18 or 19 or 20 or 21 or 22 or 23 or 24 or 25 or 26 or 27 or 28 or 29 or 30 or 31 or 32 or 33 or 34 or 35 or 36 or 37 or 38 or 39 or 40 or 41 or 42 or 43 or 44 or 45 or 46 or 47 or 48 or 49 or 50 or 51 or 52 or 53 or 54 or 55 or 56 or 57 or 58 or 59
Intervention Combination	86	60 or 61 or 62 or 63 or 64 or 65 or 66 or 67 or 68 or 69 or 70 or 71 or 72 or 73 or 74 or 75 or 76 or 77 or 78 or 79 or 80 or 81 or 82 or 83 or 84
Population AND Intervention Combination	87	85 and 86

Table 4: PsycInfo search terms

APA PsycInfo 1806 to September Week 1 2024		
Concept	Search Number	Query
Population (Individuals with a Chronic Condition)	1	(chronic adj illness*).ab,ti.
	2	(chronic adj disease*).ab,ti.
	3	(chronic adj condition*).ab,ti.
	4	(chronic adj infection*).ab,ti.
	5	(chronic adj health*).ab,ti.
	6	(chronic adj respiratory*).ab,ti.
	7	(chronic adj neurologic*).ab,ti.
	8	(chronic adj pain*).ab,ti.
	9	(chronic adj fatigue*).ab,ti.
	10	(long term adj2 condition*).ab,ti.
	11	"diabetes".ab,ti.
	12	"hypertension".ab,ti.
	13	"angina".ab,ti.
	14	"cardiovascular disease".ab,ti.
	15	"chronic obstructive pulmonary disease".ab,ti.
	16	"multiple sclerosis".ab,ti.
	17	"arthritis".ab,ti.
	18	"cancer".ab,ti.
	19	"irritable bowel syndrom*".ab,ti.
	20	"myalgic encephalomyelitis".ab,ti.
	21	"CFS".ab,ti.
	22	"ME/CFS".ab,ti.
	23	"long covid".ab,ti.

Intervention (Online support group)	24	"coronary heart disease".ab,ti.
	25	"cystic fibrosis".ab,ti.
	26	"ulcerative colitis".ab,ti.
	27	"chronic kidney disease".ab,ti.
	28	"haemophilia".ab,ti.
	29	"lupus".ab,ti.
	30	"HIV".ab,ti.
	31	"Crohn's disease".ab,ti.
	32	"sickle cell anemia".ab,ti.
	33	"fibromyalgia".ab,ti.
	34	"inflammatory bowel disease".ab,ti.
	35	"systemic sclerosis".ab,ti.
	36	exp Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/
	37	exp Chronic Illness/
	38	exp Chronic Mental Illness/
	30	exp Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease/
	40	exp Chronic Pain/
	41	exp Chronic Stress/
	42	"online support group".ab,ti.
	43	"online peer support".ab,ti.
	44	"online social support".ab,ti.
	45	(virtual adj3 group*).ab,ti.
	46	(virtual adj3 communit*).ab,ti.
	47	(virtual adj3 support*).ab,ti.
	48	(online adj3 group*).ab,ti.
	49	(online adj3 communit*).ab,ti.
	50	(online adj3 support*).ab,ti.
	51	(web adj4 group*).ab,ti.

	52	(internet adj4 group*).ab,ti.
	53	(internet adj4 communit*).ab,ti.
	54	(internet adj4 support*).ab,ti.
	55	(computer mediated adj3 group*).ab,ti.
	56	(computer mediated adj3 communit*).ab,ti.
	57	(computer mediated adj3 support*).ab,ti.
	58	(social media adj3 group*).ab,ti.
	59	(social media adj3 support*).ab,ti.
	60	(Facebook adj3 support*).ab,ti.
	61	"discussion forum*".ab,ti.
	62	"discussion fora".ab,ti.
	63	"bulletin board*".ab,ti.
	64	"Reddit".ab,ti.
	65	"chat room".ab,ti.
	66	"message board*".ab,ti.
	67	exp Online Social Networks/
	68	exp Online Community/
	69	exp Computer Mediated Communication/
Population Combination	70	1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 or 16 or 17 or 18 or 19 or 20 or 21 or 22 or 23 or 24 or 25 or 26 or 27 or 28 or 29 or 30 or 31 or 32 or 33 or 34 or 35 or 36 or 37 or 38 or 39 or 40 or 41
Intervention Combination	71	43 or 44 or 45 or 46 or 47 or 48 or 49 or 50 or 51 or 52 or 53 or 54 or 55 or 56 or 57 or 58 or 59 or 60 or 61 or 62 or 63 or 64 or 65 or 65 or 66 or 67 or 68 or 69
Population AND Intervention Combination	72	70 and 71

Table 5: Web of Science search terms

Web of Science Core Collection		
Concept	Search Query	Query
Population (Individuals with a Chronic Condition)	1	(chronic NEAR/1 illness*)
	2	(chronic NEAR/1 disease*)
	3	(chronic NEAR/1 condition*)
	4	(chronic NEAR/1 infection*)
	5	(chronic NEAR/1 health*)
	6	(chronic NEAR/1 respiratory*)
	7	(chronic NEAR/1 neurologic*)
	8	(chronic NEAR/1 pain*)
	9	(chronic NEAR/1 fatigue*)
	10	(long term NEAR/2condition*)
	11	"diabetes"
	12	"hypertension"
	13	"angina"
	14	"cardiovascular disease"
	15	"chronic obstructive pulmonary disease"
	16	"multiple sclerosis"
	17	"arthritis"
	18	"cancer"
	19	"irritable bowel syndrom*"
	20	"myalgic encephalomyelitis"
	21	"CFS"
	22	"ME/CFS"
	23	"long covid"

	24	"coronary heart disease"
	25	"cystic fibrosis"
	26	"ulcerative colitis"
	27	"chronic kidney disease"
	28	"haemophilia"
	29	"lupus"
	30	"HIV"
	31	"Crohn's disease"
	32	"sickle cell anemia"
	33	"fibromyalgia"
	34	"inflammatory bowel disease"
	35	"systemic sclerosis"
Intervention (Online support group)	36	"online support group"
	37	"online peer support"
	38	"online social support"
	39	(virtual NEAR/3 group*)
	40	(virtual NEAR/3 communit*)
	41	(virtual NEAR/3 support*)
	42	(online NEAR/3 group*)
	43	(online NEAR/3 communit*)
	44	(online NEAR/3 support*)
	45	(web NEAR/4 group*)
	46	(web NEAR/4 communit*)
	47	(web NEAR/4 support*)
	48	(internet NEAR/4 group*)
	49	(internet NEAR/4 communit*)
	50	(internet NEAR/4 support*)
	51	(computer mediated NEAR/4 group*)

	52	(computer mediated NEAR/4 communit*)
	53	(computer mediated NEAR/4 support*)
	54	(social media NEAR/3 group*)
	55	(social media NEAR/3 support*)
	56	(Facebook NEAR/3 support*)
Population Combination	57	"discussion forum**"
	58	"discussion fora"
	59	"bulletin board**"
	60	"Reddit"
	61	"chat room".
	62	"message board**"
	63	1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 or 16 or 17 or 18 or 19 or 20 or 21 or 22 or 23 or 24 or 25 or 26 or 27 or 28 or 29 or 30 or 31 or 32 or 33 or 34 or 35
Intervention Combination	64	36 or 37 or 38 or 39 or 40 or 41 or 42 or 43 or 44 or 45 or 46 or 47 or 48 or 49 or 50 or 51 or 52 or 53 or 54 or 55 or 56 or 57 or 58 or 59 or 60 or 61 or 62
Population AND Intervention Combination	65	63 and 64

Table 6: Grey Literature; Pre-Publication Databases and Google Scholar Searches

Search Type	Search Engine	Search Terms
Articles	Google Scholar (September 2024)	("chronic illness" OR "chronic disease" OR "chronic condition" OR "chronic pain") AND ("online support group" OR "online peer support")
Pre-Publications	MedRxiv (September 2024)	("chronic illness" OR "chronic disease" OR "chronic condition") AND ("online support group" OR "online peer support")
	PsyArXiv (September 2024)	Chronic condition AND online support group
Grey Literature	Google Advanced Search (September 2024)	("chronic illness" OR "chronic disease" OR "chronic condition" OR "chronic pain") AND ("online support group" OR "online peer support")
	EThOS (February 2023)	Chronic condition AND online support group
		Chronic illness AND online support group
		Chronic disease AND online support group
		Chronic pain AND online support group
		Chronic condition AND online peer support

		Chronic illness AND online peer support
		Chronic disease AND online peer support
		Chronic pain AND online peer support

Table 7: Reasons for exclusion in full text screening

Reason for exclusion	Papers excluded
Wrong publication (e.g., meeting or conference abstract, review)	[1-72]
Wrong intervention (e.g., not measuring online support group; blog; online therapy; social media)	[73-125]
Wrong population (e.g., caregivers, survivors, prior to becoming ill)	[126-135]
Wrong outcome (e.g., not health outcome or not looking at effect of online support group on health outcome)	[136-160]
Wrong method (e.g., content analysis)	[161-173]
Complex intervention	[174-203]
Foreign language	[204-207]
Duplicate of included / excluded study (e.g., PhD thesis of published paper or published paper of PhD)	[208-212]
Can't find/access	[213-229]

References:

1. Basile, M., et al., *Providing social support for adults with cystic fibrosis during the COVID-19 pandemic: Pilot study of a web-based support group*. American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine. Conference: American Thoracic Society International Conference, ATS, 2021. **203**(9).
2. Geller, H.M., et al., *Evaluating the contribution of virtual peer-led support to comprehensive prostate cancer (PCa) care: The AnCan experience*. Journal of Clinical Oncology. Conference, 2022. **40**(6).
3. Harkin, L., et al., *Experiencing online cancer communities-a qualitative study*. European Journal of Cancer, 2015. **3**: p. S134-S135.
4. Henthorne, K., et al., *75 Accesstoeducation and support for adults with cystic fibrosis byvirtual support group with a focus on readiness for lung transplant*. Journal of Cystic Fibrosis, 2021. **20**: p. S37-S38.
5. Huber, J., et al., *A cross-sectional comparison study of self-help for prostate cancer: How do online and face-to-face support groups differ?* Journal of Urology, 2015. **1**: p. e308.
6. Huber, J., et al., *Online vs. Face-to-face support groups for prostate cancer: A cross-sectional comparison study*. European Urology, Supplements, 2015. **14**: p. e374.
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Tables 8-6: Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool

Tables 8-12 display the entries for the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool. Each table represents a different research method included within the tool: qualitative, non-randomised, randomised, descriptive, and mixed methods.

Table 8: Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool Qualitative Research

Author	Title	Are there clear research questions?	Do the collected data allow to address the research question?	Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the research question?	Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the research question?	Are the findings adequately derived from the data?	Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by data?	Is there coherence between qualitative data sources, collection, analysis, and interpretation?
Shoebotham and Coulson	Therapeutic Affordances of Online Support Group Use in Women With Endometriosis	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes	Yes
Russell et al	Support amid uncertainty: Long COVID illness experiences and the role of online communities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bazrafshani et al	The role of online social networks in	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Can't tell	Yes	Yes

	improving health literacy and medication adherence among people living with HIV/AIDS in Iran: Development of a conceptual model							
Day	Exploring Online Peer Support Groups for Adults Experiencing Long COVID in the United Kingdom: Qualitative Interview Study	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Willis et al	The Power of Peers: Applying User-Generated Content to Health Behaviors “Off-Line”	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mo and Coulson	Are online support groups always beneficial? A qualitative exploration of the empowering	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

	and disempowering processes of participation within HIV/AIDS-related online support groups							
Healy et al	“Whenever you need support, you first turn to the group”: motivations and functions of whatsapp groups for youth living with HIV	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Van Uden Kraan et al	Empowering Processes and Outcomes of Participation in Online Support Groups for Patients With Breast Cancer, Arthritis, or Fibromyalgia	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Holbrey and Coulson	A qualitative investigation of the impact of peer to peer online support for women living with Polycystic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

	Ovary Syndrome							
Litchman	A multiple method analysis of peer health in the diabetes online community - chapter 5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Steadman and Pistorius	The impact of an online Facebook support group for people with multiple sclerosis on non-active users	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zigron and Bronstein	"Help is where you find it": The role of weak ties networks as sources of information and support in virtual health communities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ashtari and Taylor	The Internet Knows More Than My Physician: Qualitative Interview Study of People With Rare Diseases	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

	and How They Use Online Support Groups							
Brady et al	Accessing support and empowerment online: The experiences of individuals with diabetes	No	Can't tell	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wilson and Stock	'Social media comes with good and bad sides, doesn't it?' A balancing act of the benefits and risks of social media use by young adults with long-term conditions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Coulson	How do online patient support communities affect the experience of inflammatory bowel disease? An online survey	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Iliffe and Thompson	Investigating the beneficial experiences of online peer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

	support for those affected by alopecia: an interpretative phenomenological analysis using online interviews							
Zhu et al	Mobile Breast Cancer e-Support Program for Chinese Women With Breast Cancer Undergoing Chemotherapy (Part 1): Qualitative Study of Women's Perceptions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Willis	Applying the Health Belief Model to Medication Adherence: The Role of Online Health Communities and Peer Reviews	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vilhauer	Perceived benefits of online support	No	N/A	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

	groups for women with metastatic breast cancer							
Egerton	Expert-Moderated Peer-to-Peer Online Support Group for People With Knee Osteoarthritis: Mixed Methods Randomized Controlled Pilot and Feasibility Study	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Meade	Members' Experiences of a Neuromuscular Disorder Online Support Group	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rowlands et al	A qualitative exploration of the psychosocial needs of people living with long-term conditions and their perspectives on online peer support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Parrocha and Bernadas	'They Know What It's Like': Exploring Facebook Groups for Digital Coping	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mackie	Finding my tribe: a qualitative interview study of how people living with metastatic breast cancer perceive support groups	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Walsh	"Living with Loss": A qualitative exploration of existential fears among people with advanced lung cancer in online lung cancer support groups	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mills	Online support groups, social identity, and the health and wellbeing of adults with Long	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

	Covid: An interview study							
Hurtado	Towards quality of life: experiences and health-behavior change in chronic and oncological patients in virtual communities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	No	No	No
Hodson and O'Meara	Curating Hope: The Aspirational Self and Social Engagement in Early-Onset Cancer Communities on Social Media	No	No	No	Can't tell	Yes	Yes	Yes
Garrett	The Role of Social Media in the Experiences of COVID-19 Among Long-Hauler Women: Qualitative Study	No	No	No	Can't tell	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 9: MMAT Non-Randomised Research

Author	Title	Are there clear research questions?	Do the collected data allow to address the research question?	Are the participants representative of the target population?	Are the measurements appropriate regarding both the outcome and intervention?	Are there complete outcome data?	Are the confounders accounted for in the design and analysis?	During the study period, is the intervention administered (or exposure) as intended?
Huber et al	Face-to-face vs. online peer support groups for prostate cancer: A cross-sectional comparison study	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Can't tell
Lieberman et al	Electronic support groups for breast carcinoma	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Han et al	Lurking as an Active Participation Process: A Longitudinal Investigation of Engagement with an Online Cancer Support Group	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes
Shaw et al	Communicating about self and others within an online support group for women with breast cancer and subsequent outcomes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	No

Shim et al	How Does Insightful and Emotional Disclosure Bring Potential Health Benefits?: Study Based on Online Support Groups for Women with Breast Cancer	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes
Kim et al	The process and effect of supportive message expression and reception in online breast cancer support groups	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes
Shaw et al	Effects of prayer and religious expression within computer support groups on women with breast cancer	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	No
Shaw et al	Effects of Insightful Disclosure Within Computer	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	No
Han et al	A Longitudinal Investigation of Empathic Exchanges in Online Cancer Support Groups: Message Reception and Expression Effects on Patients' Psychosocial Health Outcomes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Kim et al	Opinion Leaders in Online Cancer Support Groups: An Investigation of Their Antecedents and Consequences	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell
Leavitt et al	eSupport: Feasibility trial of telehealth support group participation to reduce loneliness in multiple sclerosis	No	Can't tell	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	No	Yes
Costello et al	Associations Between Engagement With an Online Health Community and Changes in Patient Activation and Health Care Utilization: Longitudinal Web-Based Survey	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Can't tell	No	Can't tell
Letourneau et al	Impact of Online Support for Youth With Asthma and Allergies: Pilot Study	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	No	No	Can't tell
Batenburg and Das	Emotional Approach Coping and the Effects of Online Peer-Led Support Group Participation Among Patients With Breast Cancer: A Longitudinal Study	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell

Lieberman et al	Electronic support groups for breast carcinoma	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Lange et al	Effectiveness, acceptance and satisfaction of guided chat groups in psychosocial aftercare for outpatients with prostate cancer after prostatectomy	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lieberman and Winzelberg	The relationship between religious expression and outcomes in online support groups: A partial replication	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes
Petrovski and Zivkovic	Are We Ready to Treat Our Diabetes Patients Using Social Media? Yes, We Are	Yes	No	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	No	Yes
Ronen	Facilitated WhatsApp Support Groups for Youth Living With HIV in Nairobi, Kenya: Single-Arm Pilot Intervention Study	No	No	Can't tell	Yes	No	No	Can't tell

Table 10: MMAT Randomised Studies

Author	Title	Are there clear research questions?	Do the collected data allow to address the research question?	Is randomisation appropriately performed?	Are the groups comparable at baseline?	Are there complete outcome data?	Are outcome assessors blinded to the intervention provided?	Did the participants adhere to the assigned intervention?
Pester et al	Facing Pain Together: A Randomized Controlled Trial of the Effects of Facebook Support Groups on Adults With Chronic Pain	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
Tankha	Engagement in a Facebook peer support intervention and its impact on the psychosocial aspects of pain: a mixed methods investigation	Yes	No	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
Lopez-Olivo	A randomized controlled trial evaluating the effects of social networking on chronic disease management in rheumatoid arthritis	No	Can't tell	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes
Baydoun et al	Comparing online support groups with psychoeducation versus psychoeducation alone for distressed breast cancer survivors: a randomized controlled trial	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Can't tell
Koufopolous et al	A Web-Based and Mobile Health Social Support Intervention to Promote Adherence to Inhaled Asthma Medications: Randomized Controlled Trial	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

Changrani	Online cancer support groups: experiences with underserved immigrant	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Can't tell	Can't tell	Can't tell	Yes
Salzer	A randomized, controlled study of Internet peer-to-peer interactions among women newly diagnosed with breast cancer	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Can't tell	Yes

Table 11: MMAT Descriptive studies

Author	Title	Are there clear research questions?	Do the collected data allow to address the research question?	Is the sampling strategy relevant to address the research question?	Is the sample representative of the target population?	Are the measurements appropriate?	Is the risk of nonresponse bias low?	Is the statistical analysis appropriate to answer the research question?
Herrero et al	Participation of Patients With Type 2 Diabetes in Online Support Groups is Correlated to Lower Levels of Diabetes Self-Management	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Can't tell	No
Bazrafshani et al	The role of online social networks in improving health literacy and medication adherence among people living with HIV/AIDS in Iran: Development of a conceptual model	No	No	No	Can't tell	Yes	No	No
Fullwood et al	Lurking towards empowerment: Explaining propensity to engage with online health support groups and its association with positive outcomes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
Babyar	The role of social media in the relationship between social support and adherence in children with cystic fibrosis	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Can't tell

Beaudoin and Tao	Benefiting from social capital in online support groups: an empirical study of cancer patients	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
Mo and Coulson	Developing a model for online support group use, empowering processes and psychosocial outcomes for individuals living with HIV/AIDS	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
Lieberman et al	The role of insightful disclosure in outcomes for women in peer-directed breast cancer groups: A replication study	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
Mo and Coulson	Living with HIV/AIDS and Use of Online Support Group	yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
Seçkin	I Am Proud and Hopeful: Age-Based Comparisons in Positive Coping Affect Among Women Who Use Online Peer-Support	Yes	Yes	No	No	Can't tell	Can't tell	Yes
van Uden Kraan et al	Participation in online patient support groups endorses patients' empowerment	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Can't tell	Yes
Hansen	Lifestyle changes among people with type 2 diabetes are associated with participation in online groups and time since diagnosis	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

Chung et al	Perceived online social support for Parkinson's disease patients: The role of support type, uncertainty, contentment, and psychological quality of life	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Chen et al	Interrelationship between Interpersonal Interaction Intensity and Health Self-Efficacy in People with Diabetes or Prediabetes on Online Diabetes Social Platforms: An In-Depth Survey in China	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
Huber et al	The effect of an online support group on patients' treatment decisions for localized prostate cancer: An online survey	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	No	Yes
Setoyama	Benefits of Peer Support in Online Japanese Breast Cancer Communities: Differences Between Lurkers and Posters	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	No	Yes
Kosugi	Association Between Loneliness and the Frequency of Using Online Peer Support Groups Among Cancer Patients With Minor Children: A Cross-Sectional Web-Based Study	Yes - aim	Yes	No	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
Cummings et al	Beyond hearing: Where real-world and online support meet	Yes	Yes	No	Can't tell	No	No	No

Zheng et al	Improving customer well-being through two-way online social support	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Parrish et al	Perceptions of the members of an online support group for women with gynecologic cancers and pre-cancers regarding online support, illness, information, and awareness	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	No	Yes	No
Mo and Coulson	Online support group use and psychological health for individuals living with HIV/AIDS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
Sparling et al	In-person and online social participation and emotional health in individuals with multiple sclerosis	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
Algtewi et al	Online support groups for head and neck cancer and health-related quality of life	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
Seckin	Psychological support using internet: Who joins online cancer support groups and patterns of participation	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	No	Can't tell	No
Batenburg and Dase	Emotional Coping Differences Among Breast Cancer Patients From an Online Support Group: A Cross-Sectional Study	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes

van Uden Kraan et al	Self-Reported Differences in Empowerment Between Lurkers and Posters in Online Patient Support Groups	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
Batenburg and Dase	Virtual Support Communities and Psychological Well-Being: the Role of Optimistic and Pessimistic Social Comparison Strategies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
Bartlett and Coulson	An investigation into the empowerment effects of using online support groups and how this affects health professional/patient communication	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Can't tell	Can't tell	Yes
Kaal et al	Online support community for adolescents and young adults (AYAs) with cancer: user statistics, evaluation, and content analysis	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Can't tell	Can't tell	Yes
Herrero et al	Do online support groups influence the well-being of patients with diabetes?	Yes	Yes	No	Can't tell	No	Can't tell	Yes
Meng et al	How Cancer Patients Benefit from Support Networks Offline and Online: Extending the Model of Structural-to-Functional Support	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Can't tell	Yes

Mo and Coulson	Empowering processes in online support groups among people living with HIV/AIDS: A comparative analysis of 'lurkers' and 'posters'	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
Morehouse et al	Impacts of online support groups on quality of life, and perceived anxiety and depression in those with ME/CFS: a survey	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Can't tell	Yes
Vanstrum et al	An Exploration of Online Support Community Participation Among Patients With Vestibular Disorders	Yes	Yes	No	Can't tell	No	Can't tell	Yes
Litchman	A multiple method analysis of peer health in the diabetes online community - chapter 4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	No	Can't tell	Yes
Thewlis	The Role of Online Social Support for Individuals Living with Disabilities and Chronic Illness: Investigating Stress, Resilience and Positive Mental Health	Yes	No	Yes	Can't tell	No	No	No

Terborg	Managing a Chronic Illness: An Exploratory Cross-sectional Study on the Association Between Contributing to an Online Self-help Platform and the Self-management, Illness Perception, and Chronic Care Assessment of Users Suffering From Chronic Tinnitus	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	No	Yes
Vanstrumet al	Utilization of Face-to-Face Vestibular Support Groups: A Comparison to Online Group Participation	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Can't tell	No	Yes
Tam et al	Head and Neck Cancer Online Support Groups: Disparities in Participation and Impact on Patients	No	N/A	Yes	Can't tell	Can't tell	No	No
Rose et al	Characterization of the role of Facebook groups for patients who use scalp cooling therapy: a survey study	No	N/A	N/A	Can't tell	Yes	No	No

Table 12: MMAT Mixed Methods Studies

Authors	Title	Are there clear research questions	Do the collected data allow to address the research questions	Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question?	Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?	Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?	Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed?	Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?
Yao et al	The Impact of Online Social Support on Patients' Quality of Life and the Moderating Role of Social Exclusion	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Stewart et al	Impacts of online peer support for children with asthma and allergies: It just helps you every time you can't breathe well"	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Kever et al	Feasibility trial of a telehealth support group intervention to reduce anxiety in multiple sclerosis	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Cooper et al	Social media support group: Implementation and evaluation	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No

Vilhauer	Perceived Benefits of Online Support Groups for Women with Metastatic Breast Cancer	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Litchman	A multiple method analysis of peer health in the diabetes online community - Chapter 6	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Bazrafshani et al	The role of online social networks in improving health literacy and medication adherence among people living with HIV/AIDS in Iran: Development of a conceptual model	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Holdren	Perspectives of People With Cancer or Hereditary Cancer Risk on the Use and Value of Online Peer Support	Yes	Can't tell	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Ashtari and Taylor	Patients With Rare Diseases and the Power of Online Support Groups: Implications for the Medical Community	No	Can't tell	No	No	Yes	No	No