

Introduction

The four principles of bioethics described by Beauchamp and Childress are beneficence, nonmaleficence, justice, and autonomy (1). Two definitions of autonomy are very commonly used: rational autonomy, which refers to a patient making decisions based on their own beliefs and customs, and relational autonomy, which refers to shared decision making with the input of a patient's close trusted individuals. Beauchamp and Childress described autonomous actions as those with intention, understanding, and lack of controlling factors. A fourth component that is sometimes included is authenticity, or making decisions true to one's self.

Aims and Objectives

The primary goal of this study is to determine whether a trend exists for the inclusion of authenticity in rational or relational autonomy. A secondary goal is to determine whether a trend exists with the use of autonomy and the highest degree of the authors.

Methods

Covidence, an online platform for systematic review management, was utilized for this study. Search parameters were used to identify publications from medical and philosophical journals related to the discussion of autonomy. These publications underwent title and abstract screening, full text review, and data extraction using Covidence. The results were used for data interpretation.

Results

Out of 81 studies included for data extraction, 6 studies (7.41%) included discussion of authenticity within the context of defining autonomy. Authenticity was used in reference to relational autonomy in 2 publications written by first-authors with M.D.'s. It was used in reference to rational autonomy in 4 publications, of which 3 were written by first-authors with Ph.D.'s and 1 with M.D.

Conclusions

Our findings indicate that M.D. first-authors are more likely to include authenticity in reference to relational autonomy, while Ph.D. first-authors are more likely to include it with rational autonomy. These results will be organized within a systematic review to analyze varying meanings of autonomy in bioethics.

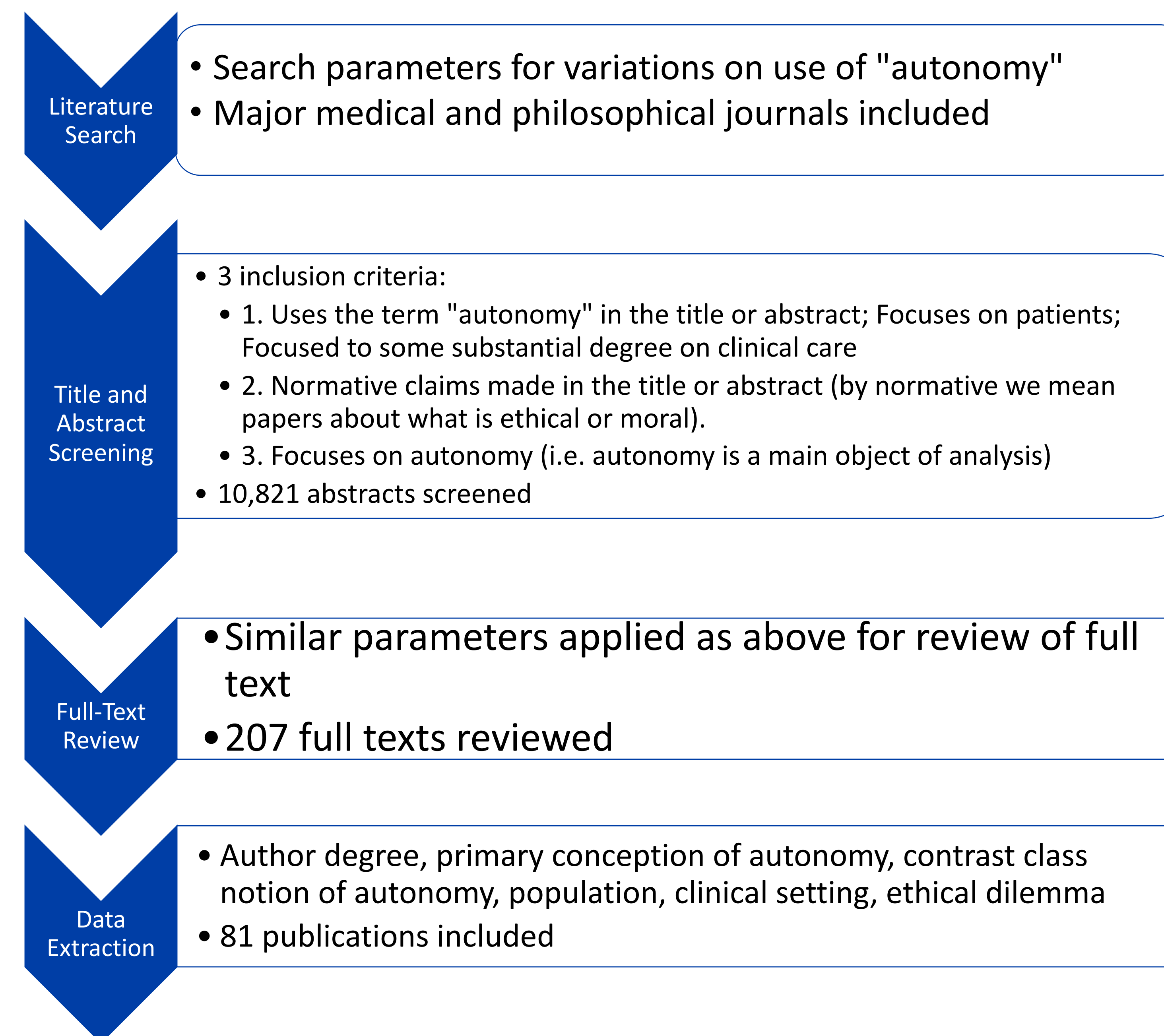


Figure 1. Flowchart depicting each stage of the systematic review process used in this study with criteria used at each stage.

References

1. Beauchamp TL, Childress JF. *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*. 8th ed. Oxford University Press; 2019.

Acknowledgements

Thank you very much to Michael Balce for his assistance with every stage of the systematic review process, and to Stephanie Swanberg, without whom this project never could have begun.