

**Can access to green spaces during parkrun events contribute to the positive mental health of the participants? A literature review**

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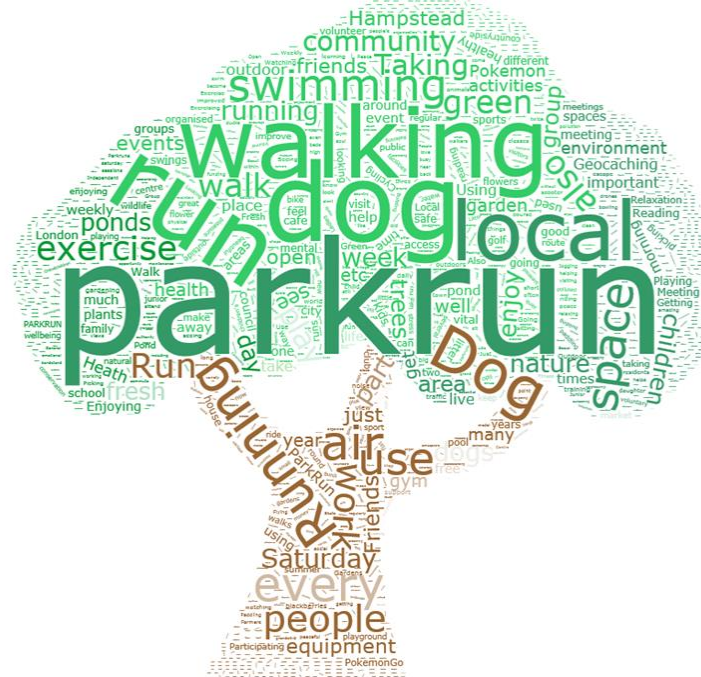
# Can access to green spaces during *parkrun* events contribute to the positive mental health of the participants? A literature review

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# Green Exercise

- Physical activity in natural environments can support mental health.
- Parks are a convenient way for people living in urban areas to access green space.
- A UK-wide survey of 13,000 people found that a common reason for using a park is to attend a *parkrun* event.<sup>1</sup>



# **Parkrun Events**

- Free, weekly, timed 5km event
- Run, walk and volunteer
- Socialise with the local parkrun community
- Tourism and milestones



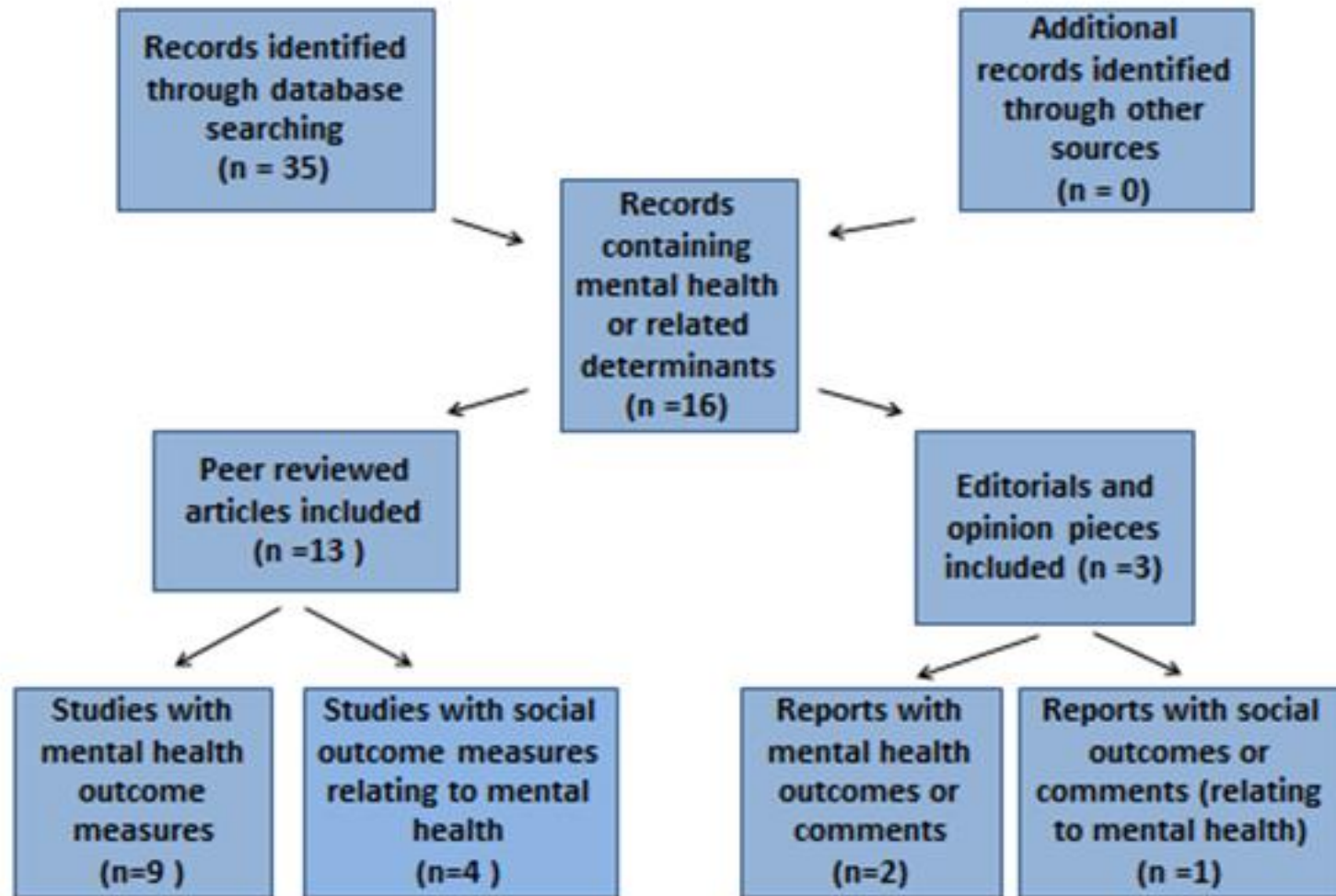
# Literature Review

Aims:

- To determine what research has already been undertaken on the mental health effects of *parkrun*.
- To identify gaps in the published research to plan further research into *parkrun* and mental health.

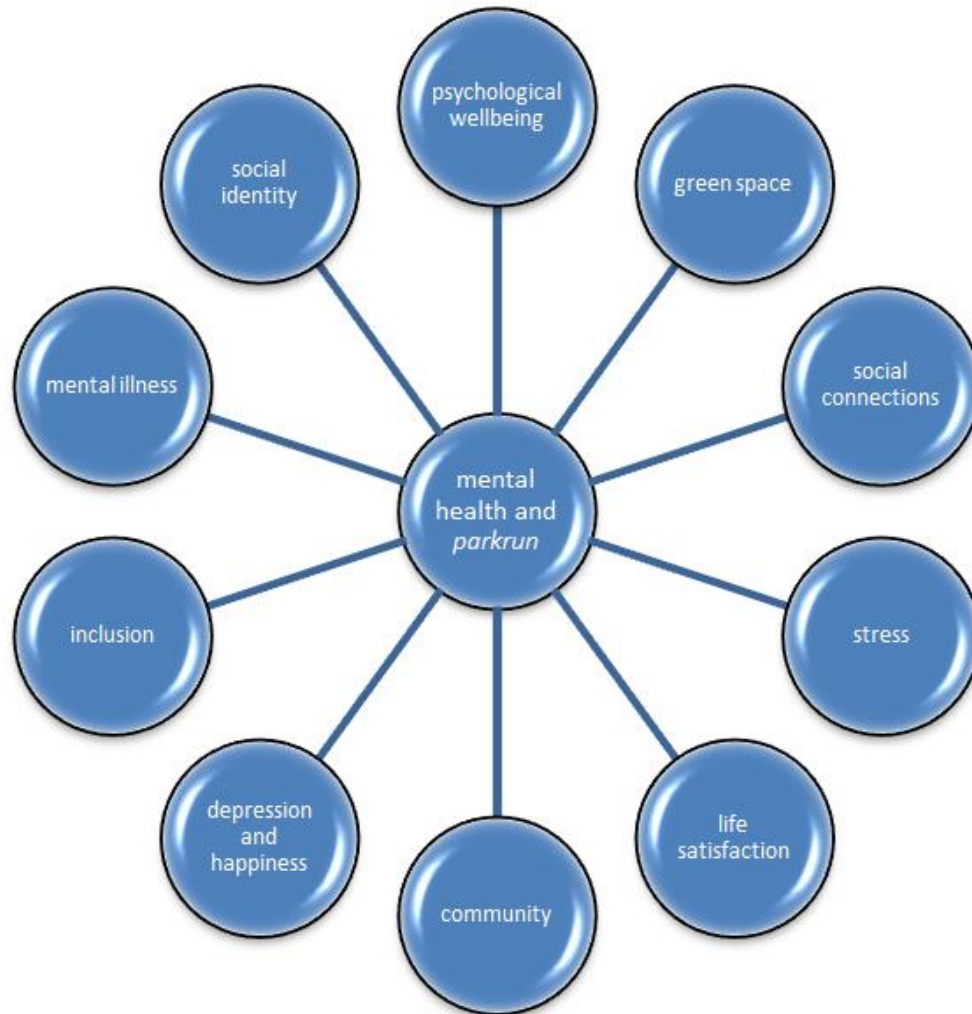


# Record Selection Process





# Overview



# Outcome Measures

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (2 studies)

1. Stress scores reduced over time for both novice and regular parkrunners.<sup>8</sup>
2. PSS to measure stress levels immediately before and immediately after a single parkrun event <sup>3</sup> Stress scores were reduced in all the groups studied, where the impact of different green exercise environments were compared.<sup>3</sup>





# Outcome Measures

Other outcome measures were used in only one study;

- Profile of Mood States,
- Short Depression Happiness Scale (SDHS).
- Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale.

Stevinson and Hickson<sup>2</sup> and Hindley<sup>17</sup> both used the same mental wellbeing 5 point scale, but this does not appear to be a validated scale.



# *parkrun* Health and Wellbeing

- Independent study from Sheffield Hallam University <sup>18,19</sup>
- 69% of UK participants reported improvements to their mental health.
- 84% improvement to their happiness for volunteers, compared to 79% for people who did not volunteer



# *parkrun* and Green Exercise

- Only one study specifically addressed the effect of green exercise on *parkrun* participants<sup>3</sup>.
- Four different natural environments were compared to determine the effect on psychological wellbeing; beach, grassland, riverside or heritage.
- Sites did not change the effect on psychological wellbeing – they all had a positive effect to a similar extent.



# Conclusion

- *parkrun* is a popular community activity which takes place weekly in parks and green spaces worldwide.
- Only a small number of published studies examined the effect of *parkrun* participation on mental health.
- Analysis of the *parkrun* Health and Wellbeing survey mental health data and undertaking a qualitative study related to the results will address this gap in the literature.





- Thank you to the Centre for Sports Engineering Research at Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) who are funding this research project.

Competing interests:

- AD, SH and HQ are *parkrun* registrants.
- SH, HQ and AB are members of the independent *parkrun* research board at the Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre (AWRC) at SHU.





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# Questions & feedback welcome.



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Photographs by Padraig Fahey, *parkrun* ambassador.