

INPLASY

INPLASY202570098

doi: 10.37766/inplasy2025.7.0098

Received: 24 July 2025

Published: 24 July 2025

Corresponding author:

Jaume Vives

jaume.vives@uab.cat

Author Affiliation:

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

Reporting quality in psychological interventions. Implications for cumulative science and evidence-based practice. A scoping review protocol

Vives, J; Lorente, S; Casellas-Grau, A; López-González, E; Marin-Garcia, JA; Molla, C; Rodrigo, MF; Viguer, P; Losilla, JM.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Support - Grant PID2022-141403NB-I00.

Review Stage at time of this submission - Piloting of the study selection process.

Conflicts of interest - None declared.

INPLASY registration number: INPLASY202570098

Amendments - This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 24 July 2025 and was last updated on 24 July 2025.

INTRODUCTION

Review question / Objective The general aim of this study is to appraise the reporting quality of psychological interventions. Specific objectives are to:

- Describe the most common characteristics of reporting.
- Analyze the replicability of the interventions.
- Explore the presence of elements that characterize complex interventions and whether they are related to the quality of the reporting and the replicability of the intervention.
- Analyze whether a) the aim of the study (devoted exclusively to the development of the intervention, or also including efficacy/effectiveness, or feasibility), b) the area of specialty to which the study belongs (public health, clinical, education, and, finally, social and organizational), and c) the use of reporting tools or guidelines, are related to

the quality of reporting and the replicability of the intervention.

Background Evidence-based practice is grounded on cumulative science, which is usually based on systematic reviews of the results of primary studies. However, the ability of a systematic review to synthesize evidence is often diminished—or even impeded—by deficiencies in the scientific reporting of primary studies. Primary studies focused on the report of an intervention (whether it is its development, efficacy, effectiveness or feasibility) may not be an exception.

Rationale The lack of quality in research reporting, whether due to a lack of completeness, transparency and/or precision, is a pressing problem for the advancement of scientific knowledge that has affected all the health sciences specialties for decades. Moreover, inadequate

reporting of research is a major source of waste in research. In the case of psychological interventions, there is another fundamental implication related to evidence-based practice. If the characteristics related to the implementation of proposed psychological interventions are not reported with sufficient information, it is not possible to faithfully replicate them and, therefore, it is not possible for the practice involving the application of interventions to be evidence-based. The emergence of reporting guidelines, like CONSORT and STROBE, have led to an improvement in the quality of research reporting. However, the impact of these guidelines and their adherence remain in need of improvement. The growing importance given to evidence-based practice, as well as the concerns raised regarding the replicability of published studies, along with the recent appearance guidelines to develop interventions, such as those focusing on complex interventions of MRC and AHRQ, and the publication of intervention-specific reporting tools and guides such as CReDECI 2, GUIDED, TIDieR, and RIPI-f may have contributed to an improved quality of the reporting of interventions.

METHODS

Strategy of data synthesis As the aim is to collect data from a sample of published studies focused on reporting psychological interventions, the search is performed on PsycINFO (Proquest). The following search strategies are applied to the different psychological specialties:

- Public health

```
((title(("intervention*" OR "treatment*" OR "therap*" OR "program*") NEAR/5 ("develop*" OR "protocol" OR "feasibility" OR "effica*" OR "effectiv*")) NOT title("review*" OR "meta-anal*")) AND PEER(yes)) AND ccl.exact("Health & Mental Health Treatment & Prevention" OR "Promotion & Maintenance of Health & Wellness" OR "Health & Mental Health Services" OR "Community & Social Services" OR "Health Psychology & Medicine" OR "Occupational & Vocational Rehabilitation" OR "Home Care & Hospice" OR "Sports & Exercise" OR "Childrearing & Child Care" OR "Nursing Homes & Residential Care" OR "Health & Mental Health Personnel Issues" OR "Aging & Older Adult Development")) AND pd(20140101-20241231)
```

- Clinical

```
((title(("intervention*" OR "treatment*" OR "therap*" OR "program*") NEAR/5 ("develop*" OR "protocol" OR "feasibility" OR "effica*" OR "effectiv*")) NOT title("review*" OR "meta-anal*")) AND PEER(yes)) AND pd(20140101-20241231) AND ccl.exact("Cognitive Therapy" OR "Psychotherapy & Psychotherapeutic Counseling"
```

```
OR "Specialized Interventions" OR "Behavior Therapy & Behavior Modification" OR "Affective Disorders" OR "Neurodevelopmental & Autism Spectrum Disorders" OR "Anxiety Disorders" OR "Behavior Disorders & Antisocial Behavior" OR "Behavioral & Psychological Treatment of Physical Illness" OR "Psychological & Physical Disorders" OR "Schizophrenia & Psychotic States" OR "Psychological Disorders" OR "Eating Disorders" OR "Speech & Language Therapy" OR "Interpersonal & Client Centered & Humanistic Therapy" OR "Personality Disorders" OR "Psychoanalytic Therapy")
```

-Social and organizational

```
((title(("intervention*" OR "treatment*" OR "therap*" OR "program*") NEAR/5 ("develop*" OR "protocol" OR "feasibility" OR "effica*" OR "effectiv*")) NOT title("review*" OR "meta-anal*")) AND PEER(yes)) AND ccl.exact("Community & Social Services" OR "Professional Personnel Attitudes & Characteristics" OR "Behavior Disorders & Antisocial Behavior" OR "Occupational & Vocational Rehabilitation" OR "Social Processes & Social Issues" OR "Organizational Psychology & Human Resources" OR "Criminal Behavior & Juvenile Delinquency" OR "Personnel Management & Selection & Training" OR "Working Conditions & Industrial Safety" OR "Management & Management Training" OR "Organizational Behavior" OR "Personnel Attitudes & Job Satisfaction" OR "Social Psychology" OR "Mass Media Communications" OR "Marriage & Family" OR "Occupational Interests & Guidance" OR "Police & Legal Personnel" OR "Consumer Attitudes & Behavior")
```

- Education

```
ccl.exact("Curriculum & Programs & Teaching Methods" OR "Professional Education & Training" OR "Educational Administration & Personnel" OR "Educational/Vocational Counseling & Student Services" OR "Educational & School Psychology" OR "Special & Compensatory Education" OR "Classroom Dynamics & Student Adjustment & Attitudes" OR "Developmental Psychology").
```

Eligibility criteria Eligible studies are those:

1. Focused on the development of psychological interventions, whether or not they include evidence of their efficacy, effectiveness, and/or feasibility.
2. Containing psychological interventions empirically based and focused on public health, clinical, education or social and organizational specialties.
3. Providing information on the implementation process, even if parts of that process referenced previous publications (e.g., a previous protocol, a previously published manual, etc.).
4. Published from 2014 to 2024.

Source of evidence screening and selection

Titles and abstracts will be screened independently by two reviewers (with a third reviewer where necessary). When decisions are unable to be made from title and abstract alone, the full paper will be retrieved. Full-text inclusion criteria will be screened independently by two reviewers. Discrepancies during the process will be resolved through discussion (with a third reviewer where necessary). Reference lists of included articles will be manually screened to identify additional studies and authors of eligible studies will be contacted to provide missing or additional data if necessary.

Data management References identified by the search strategy will be entered into Zotero bibliographic software, and duplicates will be removed automatically.

Duplicates will be also removed by handsearching when applicable.

Regarding data extraction, a first list of items will be generated from the review of a) publications focused on establishing the characteristics that determine the complexity of interventions and b) tools and guides for assessing the quality of intervention reporting, paying special attention to those that consider the complexity of interventions and incorporate guidelines or items in their proposals aimed at capturing intervention characteristics related to their complexity.

Next, a spreadsheet will be created containing a second version of the items for data extraction, along with the corresponding response options. This version will be developed through a Delphi process involving the entire research team, using the initial version of the items as a starting point.

A pilot test will be conducted, the results of which, along with feedback from the team, will establish the basis to generate the final version of the data extraction spreadsheet.

To perform data extraction, four pairs of raters will be established. One of the authors will have the exclusive role of third rater, who will be called upon if the pairs cannot reach consensus.

Extracted data will be incorporated into CORA.RDR, a federated, multidisciplinary data repository that enables the publication of research datasets in FAIR mode.

Reporting results / Analysis of the evidence

To ensure the transparency of the study we will follow the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) Checklist.

Jamovi 2.6.4 will be used to analyze the data to address the objectives we set for this study.

Presentation of the results Results will be organized in sections according to the objectives. Data summaries will be presented in figures and tables. A report of the study will be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal and presented at a relevant conference.

Language restriction No language restriction will be applied.

Country(ies) involved Spain.

Keywords replicability; reporting quality; complex interventions; psychological interventions.

Dissemination plans A report of the study will be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal and presented at a relevant conference.

Contributions of each author

Author 1 - Jaume Vives Brosa - Conceptualization; research design; data collection; data analysis, original draft, review and editing.

Email: jaume.vives@uab.cat

Author 2 - Sonia Lorente - Data collection; data analysis, original draft, review and editing.

Email: sonia.lorente@uab.cat

Author 3 - Anna Casellas-Grau - Data collection; review and editing.

Email: acgrau@iconcologia.net

Author 4 - Emelina López-González - Data collection; review and editing.

Email: emelina.lopez@uv.es

Author 5 - Juan A. Marin-Garcia - Data collection; review and editing.

Email: jamarin@omp.upv.es

Author 6 - Cristian Molla - Data collection; review and editing.

Email: cristian.molla@uv.es

Author 7 - Maria F. Rodrigo - Data collection; review and editing.

Email: maria.f.rodrigo@uv.es

Author 8 - Paz Viguer - Data collection; review and editing.

Email: paz.viguer@uv.es

Author 9 - Josep-Maria Losilla - Conceptualization; research design; data collection; data curation; data analysis, original draft, review and editing.

Email: josepmaria.losilla@uab.cat