

Predictors of and Interventions Against Self-Stigmatisation – Results of Two Systematic Reviews

Traxler J¹, Stuhlmann CFZ¹, Paucke V¹, Westphal L¹, Graf H¹, Sommer R¹

¹Institute for Health Services Research in Dermatology and Nursing (IVDP), University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf, Hamburg, Germany



BACKGROUND

Many people with visible chronic skin diseases experience social stigmatisation and exclusion, which can lead to exclusion from full social participation. A particular problem arises from the self-stigmatisation of those affected, i.e. an internalisation of these prejudices and devaluation of their own person. This can result in feelings of shame, a negative body image and a generally low self-esteem. So far, the underlying mechanisms and factors contributing to self-stigma in this population are poorly understood and evidence-based interventions tackling self-stigma are urgently needed.

AIMS

The aims of this project were to conduct two systematic literature reviews that

- identify predictors and mechanisms of self-stigma in people with chronic skin conditions, and
- summarize existing interventions targeting self-stigma.

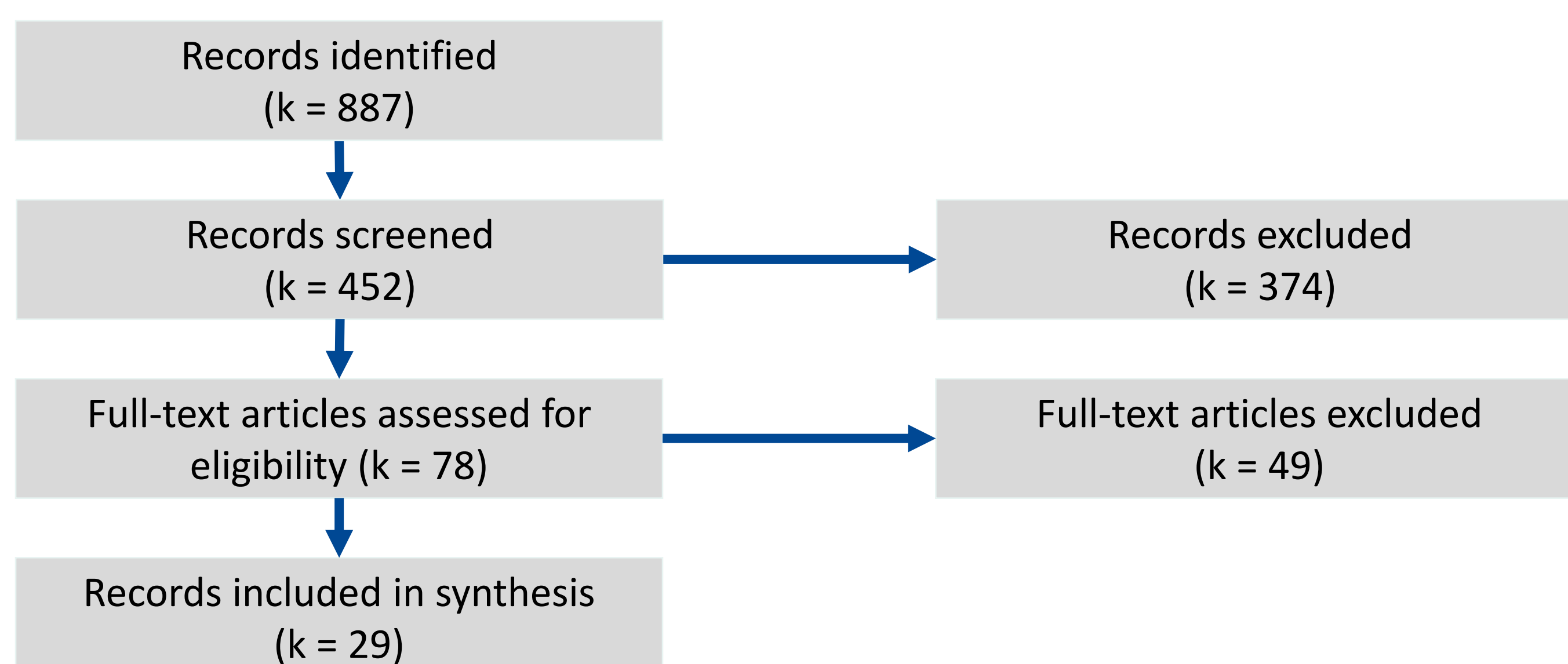
The overarching goal was to identify targets for *HautKompass*, a novel online intervention focused on reducing skin disease-related self-stigma.

METHODS

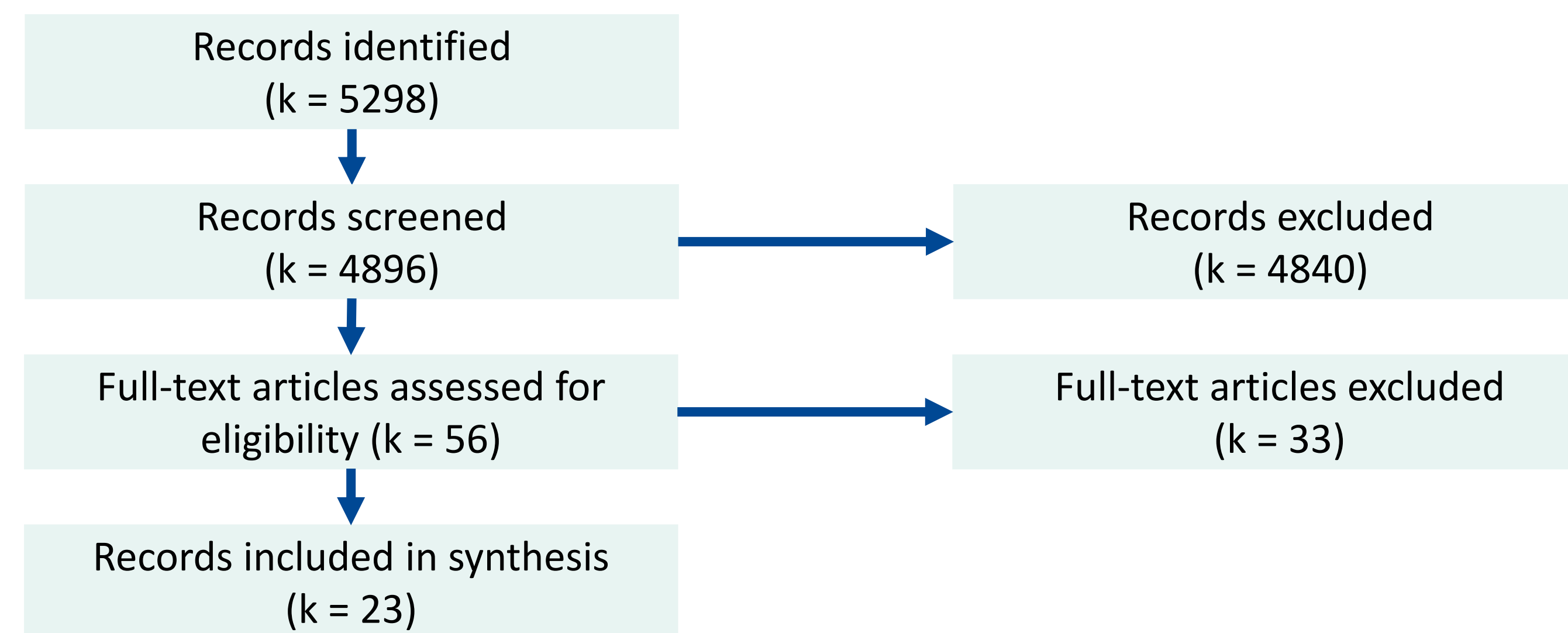
Search Strategy & Data Extraction

- Pre-registration on PROSPERO (CRD42021284948 & CRD42021284948)
- Electronic database search according to PRISMA guidelines: PubMed, EMBASE, Web of Science and PsycInfo (last search: May 2023)
- Original German- and English-language articles dealing with (a) predictors or mechanisms of self-stigma, or (b) interventions to reduce self-stigma in adults with a chronic skin disease according to ICD-11
- Abstract and full text screening as well as data extraction were performed by two independent reviewers
- Quality assessment of included articles using
 - Johanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Checklist for Analytical Cross-Sectional Studies;
 - the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) Checklists
- Narrative synthesis of the results

PRISMA Flowchart – Review “Predictors & Mechanisms”



PRISMA Flowchart – Review “Interventions”



RESULTS - “PREDICTORS & MECHANISMS”

Study Characteristics

Table 1. Characteristics of Included Studies (k = 29)

Study design	k	Valid %	Language	k	Valid %
Cross-sectional	28	96.6	English	28	96.6
longitudinal	1	3.4	German	1	3.4
Region of Study		Skin Diseases ^a			
Europe	23	79.3	Psoriasis	17	
Middle East	2	6.9	Vitiligo	6	
Asia	2	6.9	Alopecia Areata	3	
Africa	1	3.4	Dermatitis	3	
North America	1	3.4	Hidradenitis Suppurativa	3	
Sample Sizes		<i>M</i> = 152 (<i>SD</i> = 266) range = 35 - 1,485			

^a Samples could include multiple skin diseases

Factors Associated with Self-Stigma

Table 2. Number of Studies with Significant Psychosocial Predictors and Correlates of Self-Stigma by Effect Size^b

	large Predictor	Medium Predictor	Small Predictor	High Correlation	Moderate Correlation	Low Correlation
Potential Targets for Intervention						
Social Stigma	2	0	0	2	0	0
Coping Strategies	0	1	0	1	2	0
Social Support	0	1	0	1	0	0
Not Suitable as Intervention Targets						
Attachment Style	1	1	0	0	0	0
Quality of Life	1	0	0	7	9	5
Psychological Distress	1	1	0	7	5	8

^b Effect size categories as follows, Predictors: $f^2 = 0.02$ indicates a small effect; $f^2 = 0.15$ indicates a medium effect; $f^2 = 0.35$ indicates a large effect; Correlations: $r = 0.10$ indicates a small effect; $r = 0.30$ indicates a medium effect; $r = 0.50$ indicates a large effect (Cohen, 1988)

RESULTS - “INTERVENTIONS”

Study Characteristics

The studies examined different intervention approaches (Fig. 1) in different settings (Fig. 2). The samples ranged from 2 - 1,684 participants ($M = 162.09$; $SD = 350.09$). All studies reported predominantly positive effects on self-stigma and related variables.

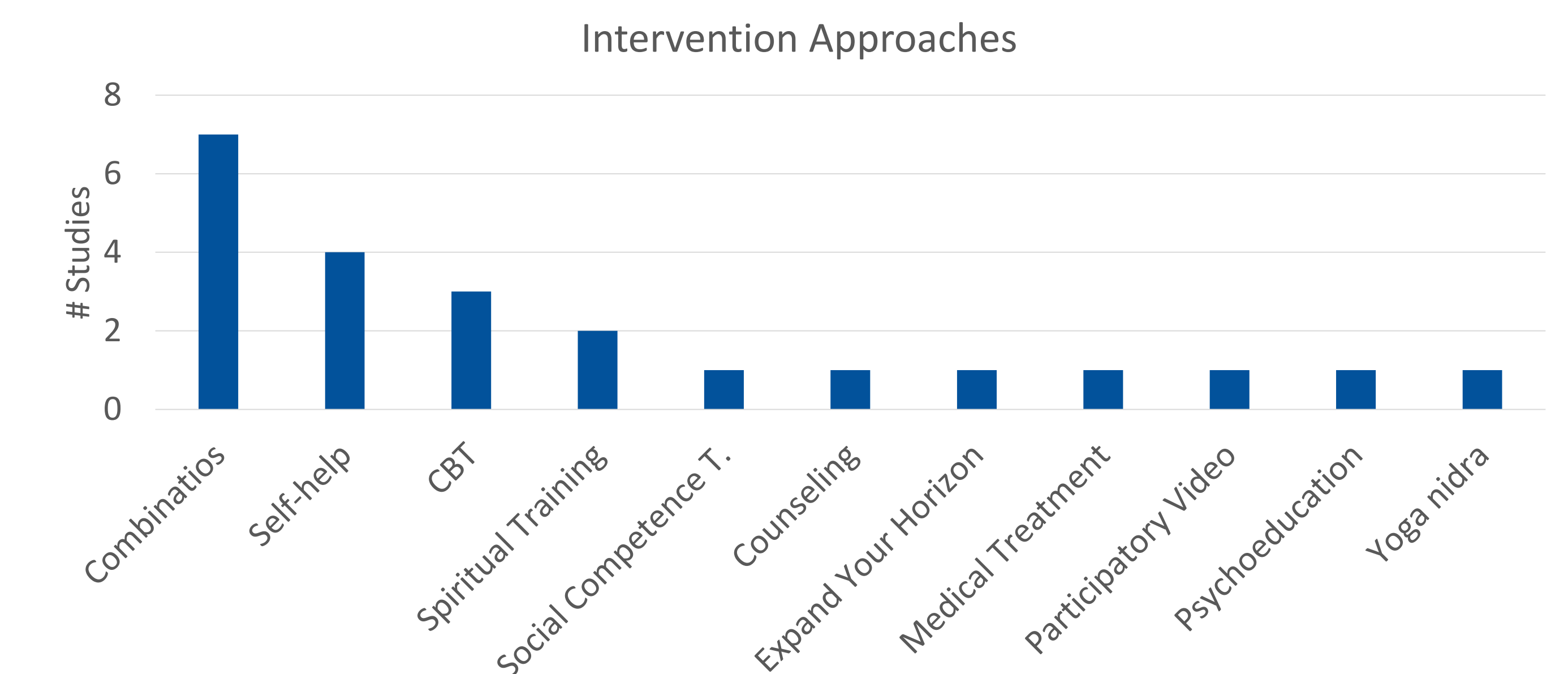


Fig. 1 | Intervention Approaches examined in the included studies.

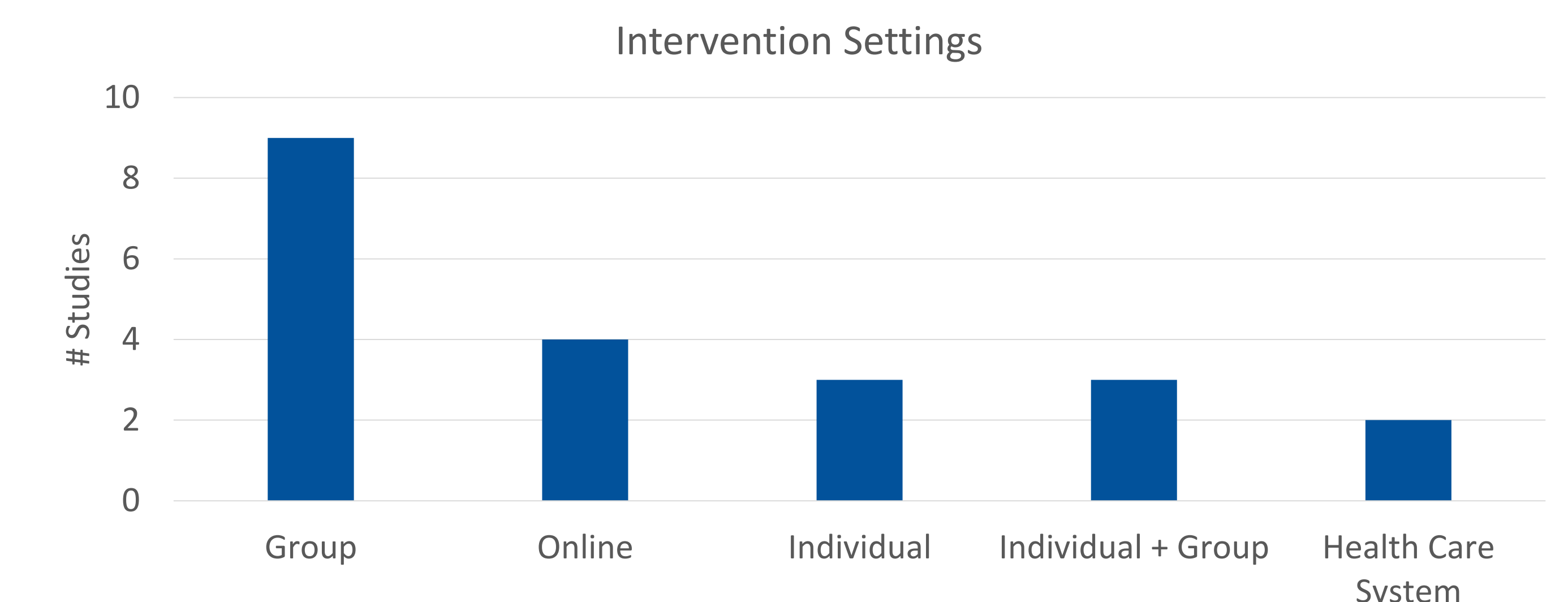


Fig. 2 | Settings in which the interventions in the included studies were administered.

DISCUSSION

Social stigma, coping strategies, and social support were most studied as predictors or correlates of self-stigma among people with skin disease and may be important targets for intervention. Furthermore, several interventions with the aim to reduce self-stigma in chronic skin disease have been implemented; however, **few such interventions are available in Europe, and there is a lack of high-quality studies examining their effectiveness.** These results provide directive targets for a novel online-intervention and help to advance psychosocial care for people with chronic skin disease.

Sponsor: Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF; Funding Number: 01GY2105)

Contact: Juliane Traxler, Institute for Health Services Research in Dermatology and Nursing Professions (IVDP), University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf
j.traxler@uke.de

