

Economic Impacts of Loneliness and Interventions to Address Loneliness among Young Adults: A Review

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Prentice Institute Speaker Series
Wednesday, April 26, 2023
12:00 – 1:00 pm
Prentice Institute, L1102



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the Prentice Institute
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The UK Appointed a Minister for Loneliness



Theresa May  @theresa_may · Jan 17, 2018



For far too many, loneliness is a sad reality of modern life. I want us all to confront this and take action to address loneliness endured by the elderly, by carers, those who have lost loved ones – those with no one to talk to or share their thoughts and experiences with.



276



443



1,052



https://twitter.com/theresa_may/status/953574859136733184

The Loneliness Epidemic

20-41% of youth report often feeling loneliness

(Barreto et al 2021, Qualter et al 2015)

Research

The prevalence of loneliness across 113 countries: systematic review and meta-analysis

BMJ 2022 ; 376 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj-2021-067068> (Published 09 February 2022)

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2022;376:e067068



Original Article | [Full Access](#)

Worldwide increases in adolescent loneliness

Jean M. Twenge ✉, Jonathan Haidt, Andrew B. Blake, Cooper McAllister, Hannah Lemon, Astrid Le Roy

First published: 01 December 2021 | <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2021.06.006> | Citations: 3



Personality and Individual Differences

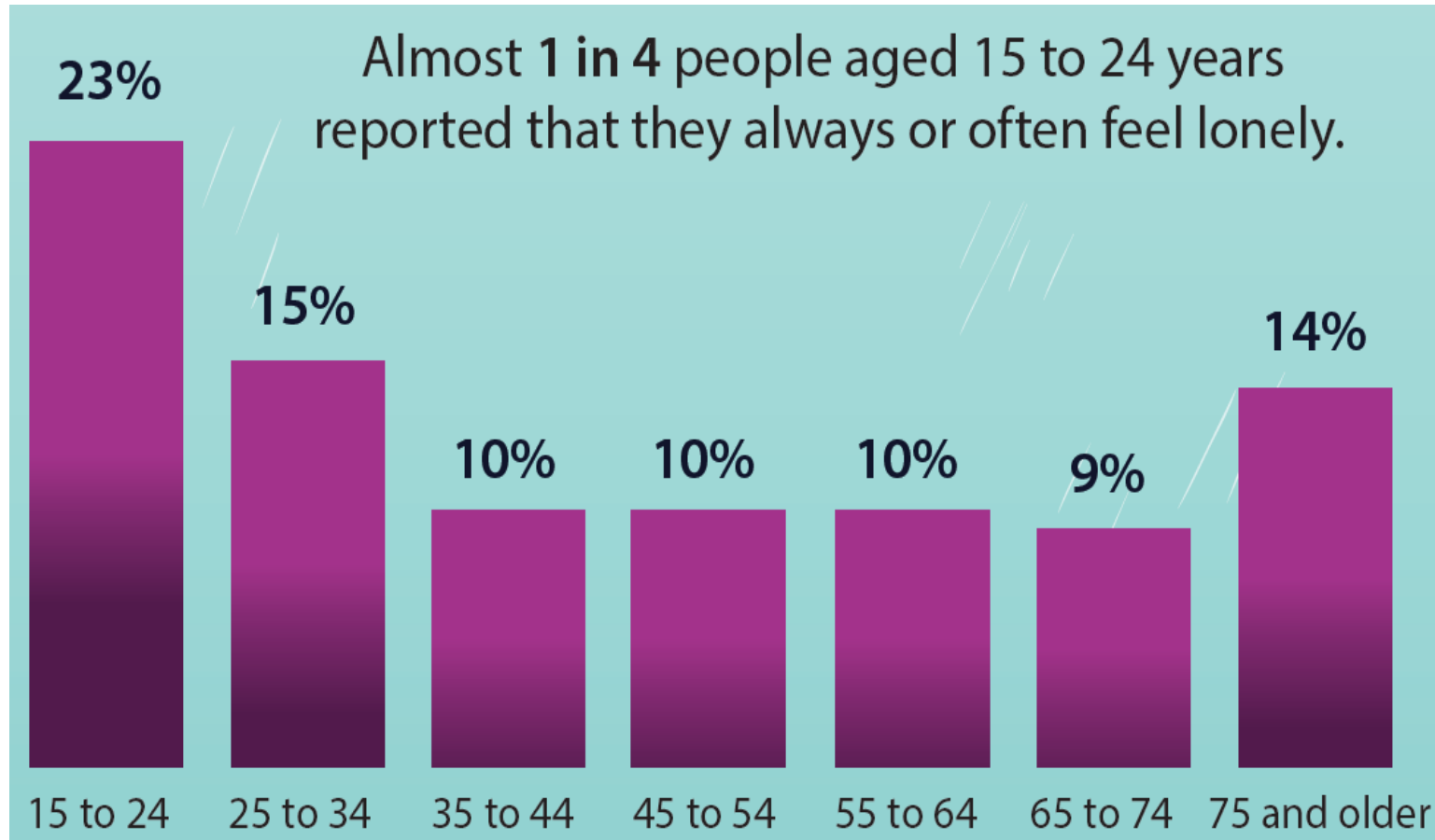
Volume 169, 1 February 2021, 110066



Loneliness around the world: Age, gender, and cultural differences in loneliness

Manuela Barreto ^{a, 1} ✉, Christina Victor ^b, Claudia Hammond ^c, Alice Eccles ^{d, 2}, Matt T. Richins ^{a, 3}, Pamela Qualter ^{d, 4} ✉

Loneliness In Canada



Statistics
Canada

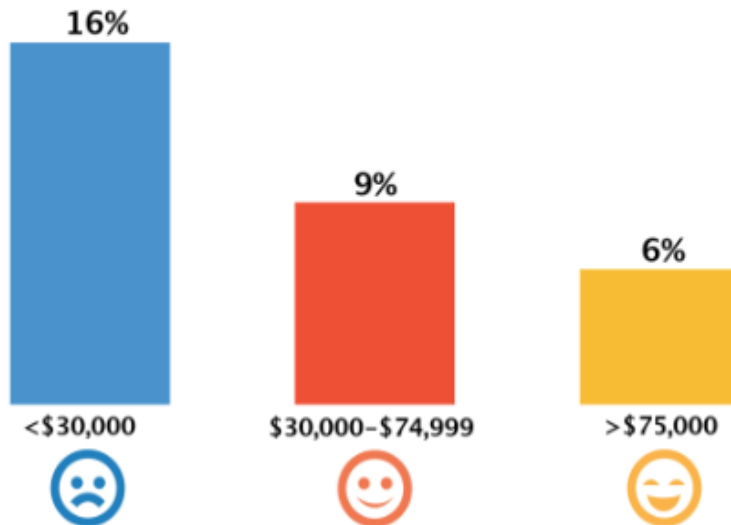
Statistique
Canada

Canadian Social Survey, Wave 2, August to September 2021, www.statcan.gc.ca

How Loneliness Can Affect Economic Outcomes?

INCOME AND ISOLATION

Percentage of individuals, based on annual family income, who report feelings of loneliness or isolation from those around them all or most of the time



Source: Pew Research Center, December 3, 2018

In the U.K., the economic cost of this loneliness—because lonely people are less productive and more prone to employment turnover—is estimated at more than £2.5 billion (**about \$3.4 billion**) annually (Waldinger & Schulz, 2023)

What Is Loneliness?

Social isolation

- Objective count of contacts
- Quantity of contacts
- Actual contacts
- Factual among of social contact
- Voluntary or involuntary
- Alleviation can be quick
- A term which is not commonly used by older people

Loneliness

- Subjective feelings
- Quality of relationships
- Discrepancy between actual and desired contacts
- Always involuntary
- Alleviation takes time
- A term which is used by older people

Measuring Loneliness

Box 2. The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) 3-item tool, and the Community Life Survey

UCLA 3-item tool

The three-item version of the UCLA scale asks indirectly about loneliness using the following questions:

- How often do you feel that you lack companionship?
- How often do you feel left out?
- How often do you feel isolated from others?

Response categories: 'Hardly ever or never', 'Some of the time' or 'Often'.

Responses to each question can be scored to provide a single loneliness score.

Direct measure

A single-item measure currently used on the Community Life Survey, which asks people directly about their experience of loneliness:

Example question: 'How often do you feel lonely?'

Response categories: 'Often or always'; 'Some of the time'; 'Occasionally'; 'Hardly ever', or 'Never'.

Research Question and Objectives

What has been reported in the literature regarding the economic impacts of loneliness as well as interventions to reduce loneliness among young adults (15-34 years) in Canada and internationally?

As a part of the Knowledge Synthesis Emerging A-social Society, the objectives of this review are:

- 1 Critically assess the state of knowledge of the economic dimensions of loneliness from a variety of sources
- 2 Identify strengths and gaps in quantitative and qualitative literature available
- 3 Identify and recommend promising policies and practices related to the interventions targeting to reduce loneliness among young people

A Scoping Review

Scoping Reviews are best
(Peters et al. 2015):

- "When a body of literature has not yet been comprehensively reviewed, or exhibits a large, complex, or heterogeneous nature not amenable to a more precise systematic review"
- To map existing literature in terms of nature, features, volume
- To clarify working definitions and conceptual boundaries of a topic or field
- To identify gaps in existing literature/research

Steps: Framework proposed by
Arksey and O'Malley (2005):



Identify research questions



Identify literature sources



Selection of studies



Extraction & charting



Summarizing & reporting

PCC Framework & Inclusion Criteria

Population	Young adults 15-35 years ¹
Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Search terms: loneliness AND young AND economic outcomes AND intervention• Loneliness NOT social isolation<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study focused on association between loneliness and key economic outcome measures in young adults• Economic dimensions: direct and indirect economic consequences for individuals• Interventions with a primary or purpose to alleviate loneliness
Context	Canada and other Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries)
Language	English, French

¹Used Statistics Canada's classification

Quantitative and qualitative literature in peer-reviewed journals and non-peer reviewed outlets between **1 January 2012 and 30 June 2022**

Economic Outcomes

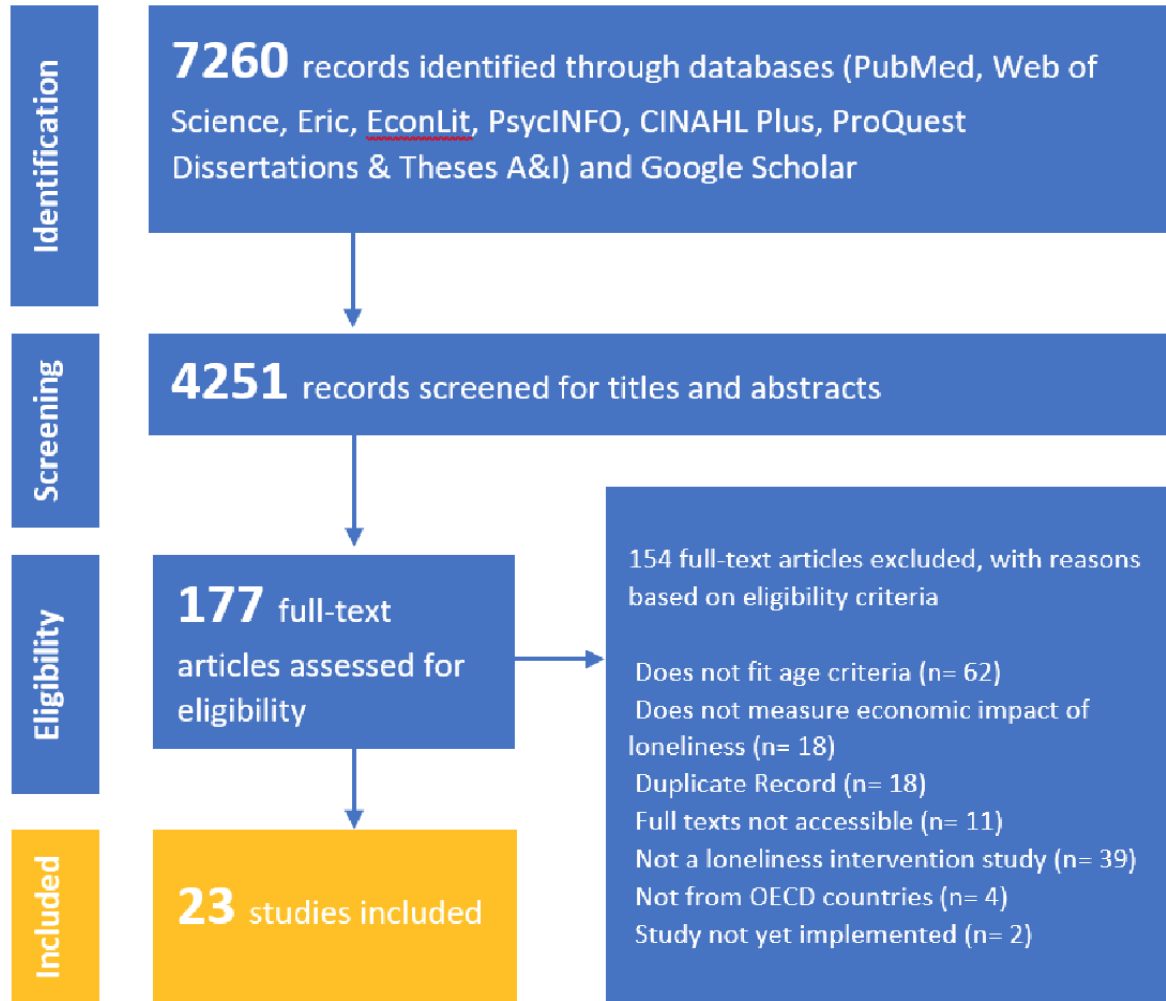
- **Direct economic outcomes:**

- employment income
- employment status
- labor market participation
- occupation
- financial stress/insecurity
- job performance/low job motivation
- job stress/strain, productivity
- work–family conflict
- housing access
- transportation
- working class
- livelihood
- financial cost

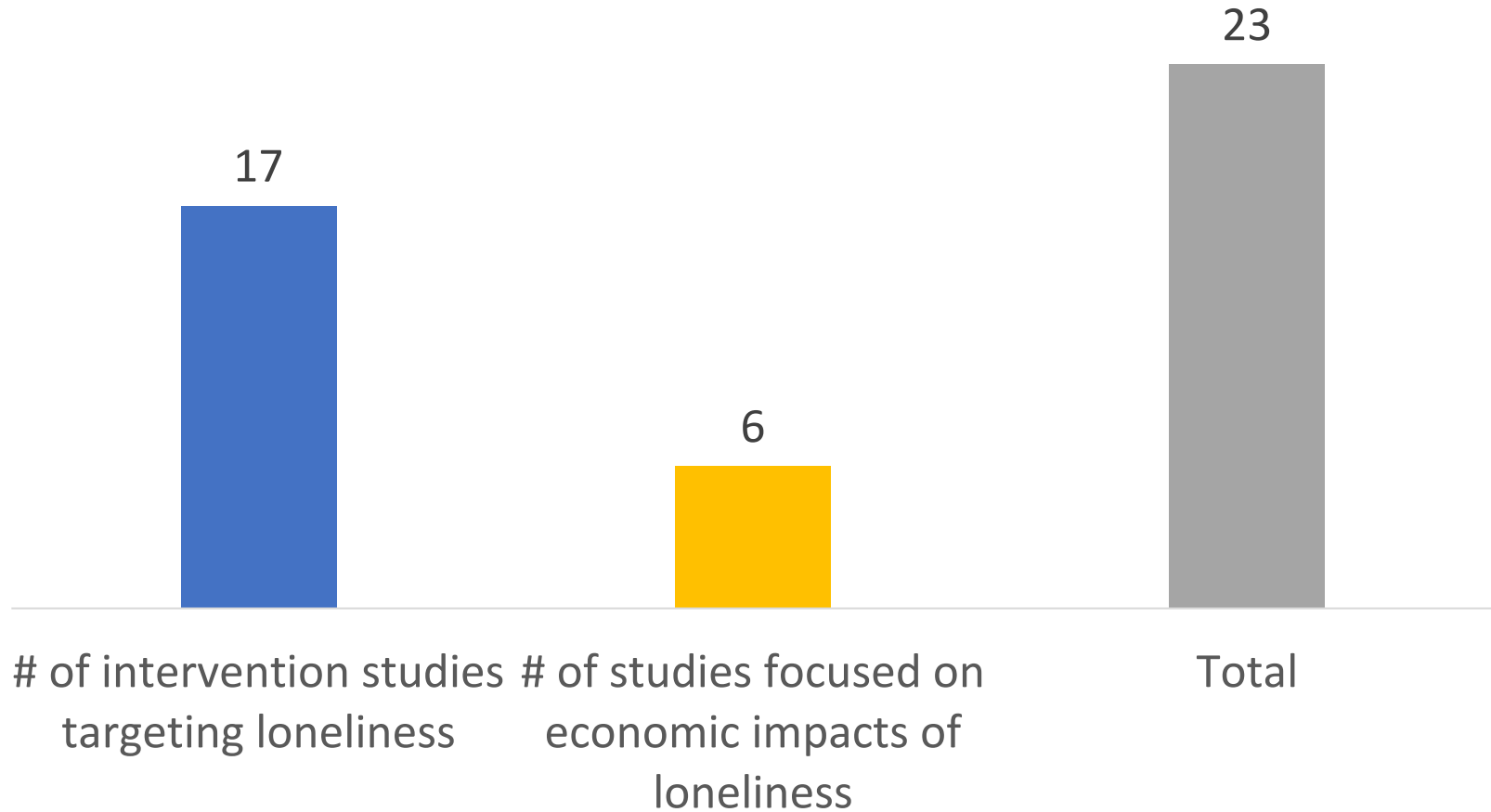
- **Indirect economic outcomes:**

- healthcare expenditures (cost of illness/treatment, absenteeism)

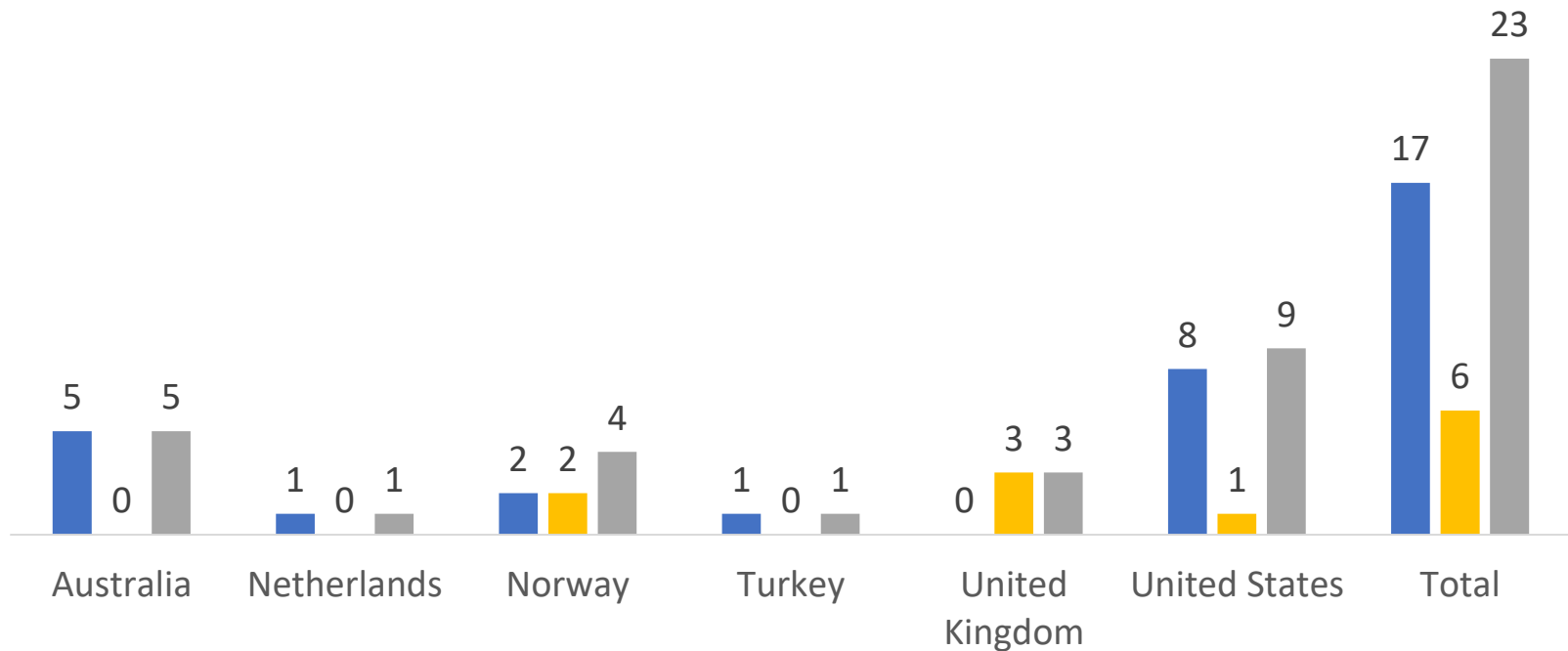
Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) Flowchart



Included Studies by Purpose

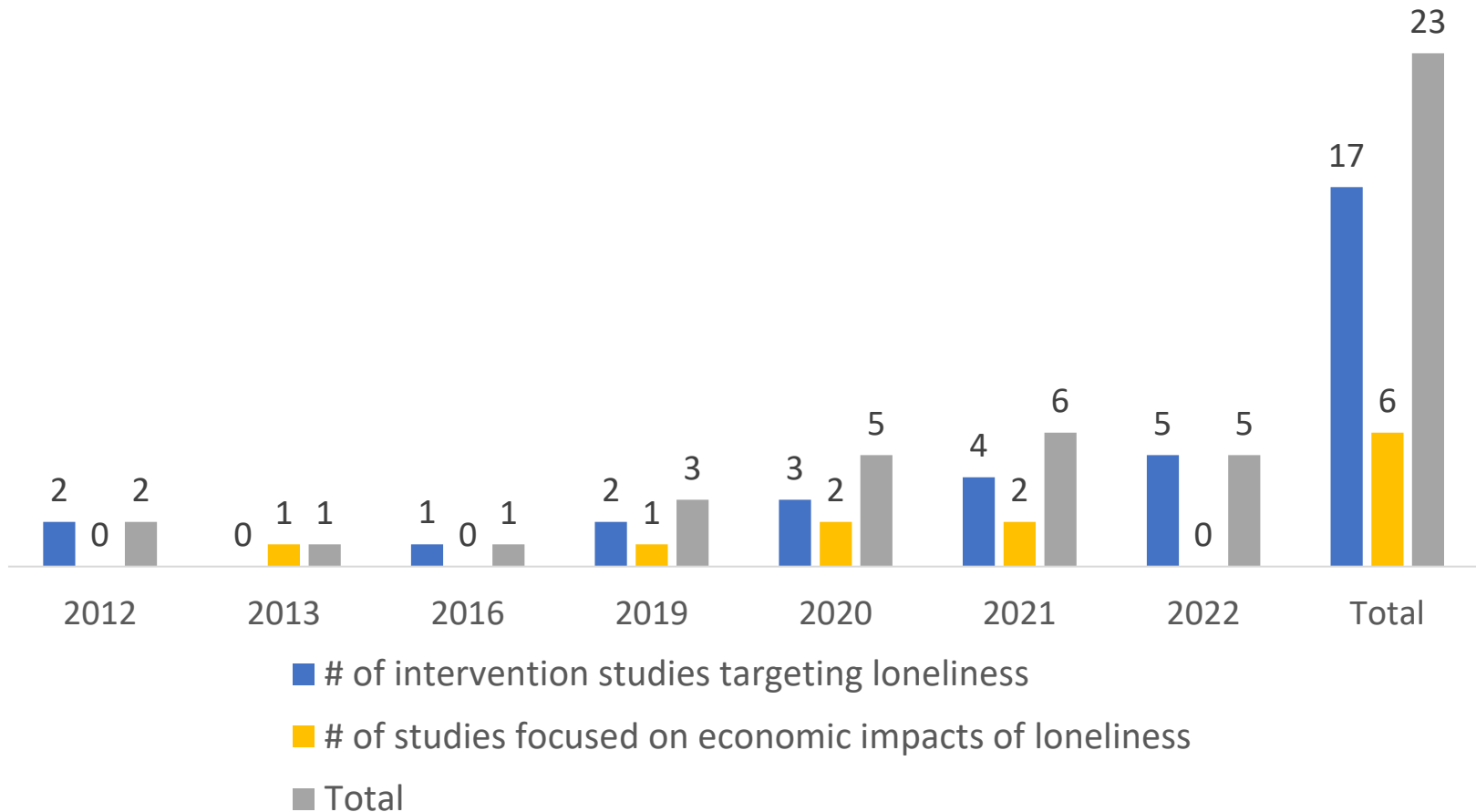


Included Studies by Country

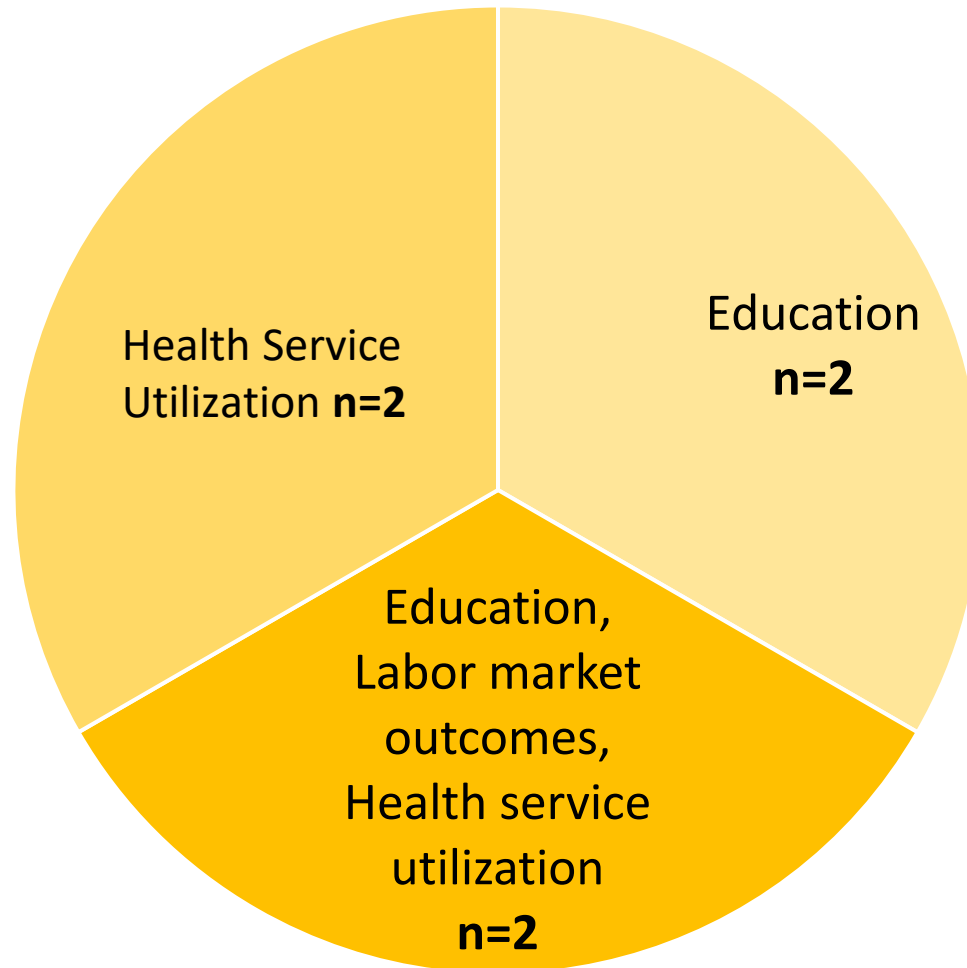


- # of intervention studies targeting loneliness
- # of studies focused on economic impacts of loneliness
- Total studies included

Included Studies by Year of Publication



Economic Outcome Dimensions Identified (n=6)



The Negative Impacts of Loneliness



Intention to quit upper secondary education



General practitioner utilization & frequency



Community and university mental health utilization



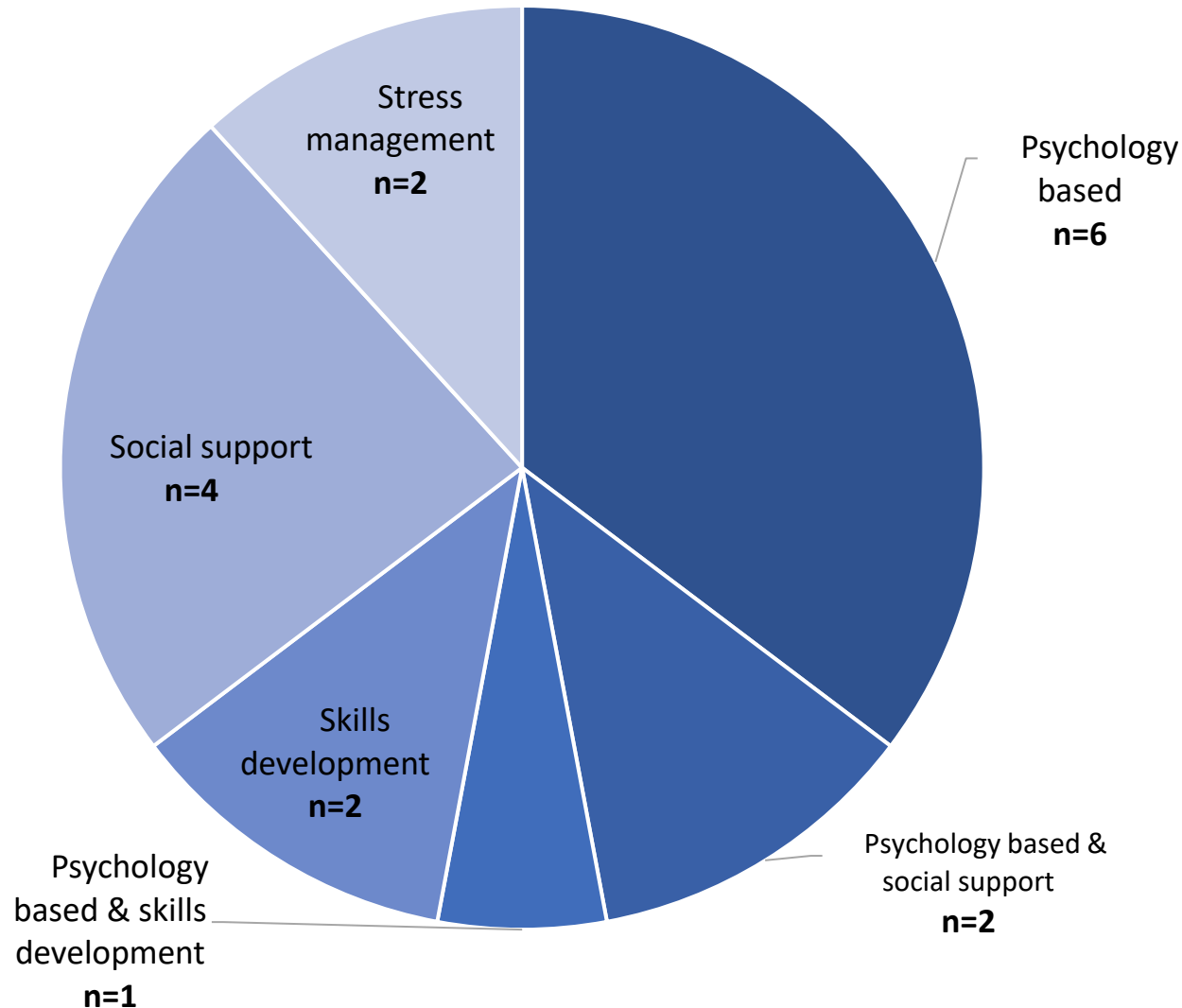
Prescription of antidepressants



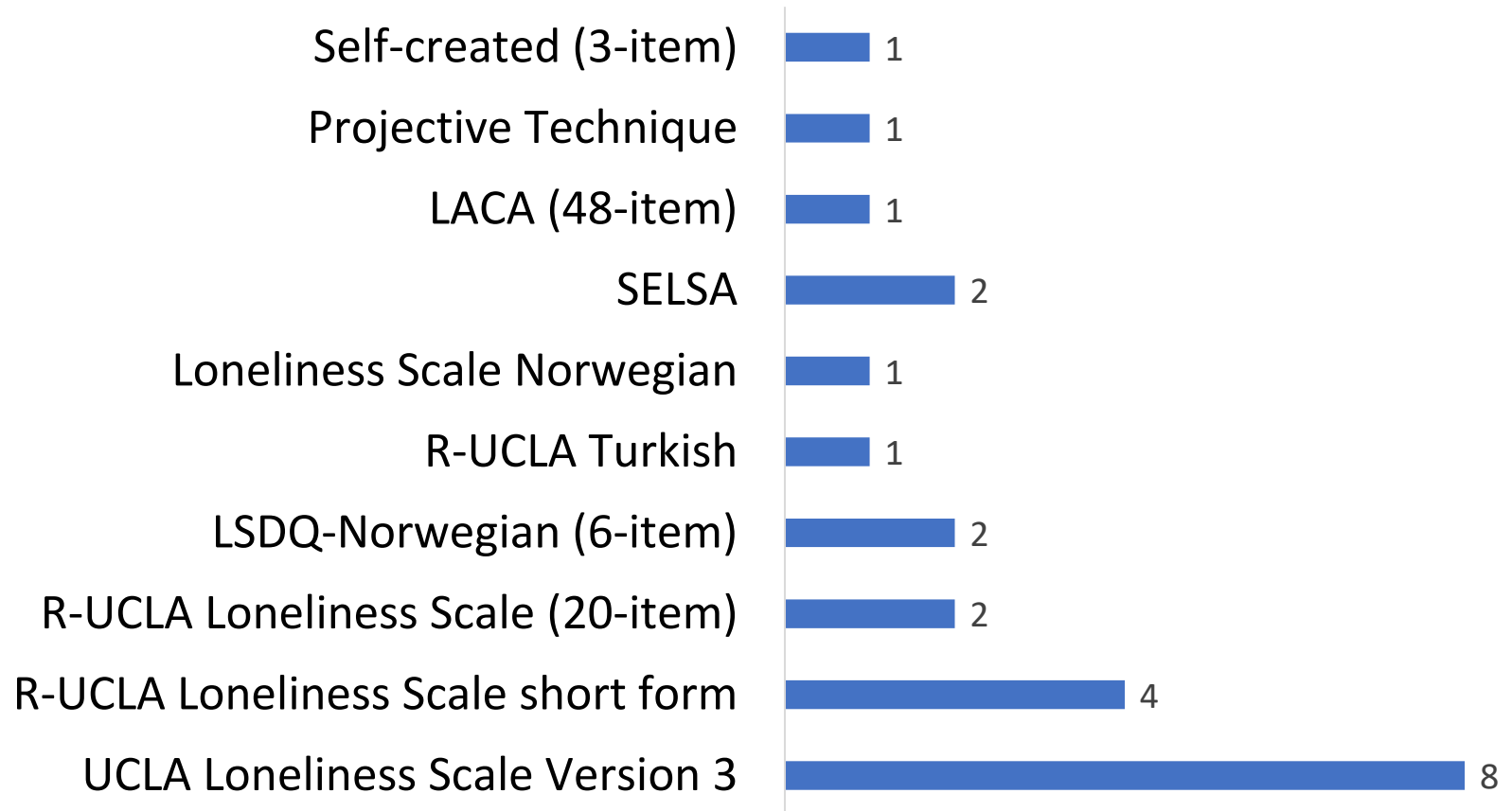
Annual Income



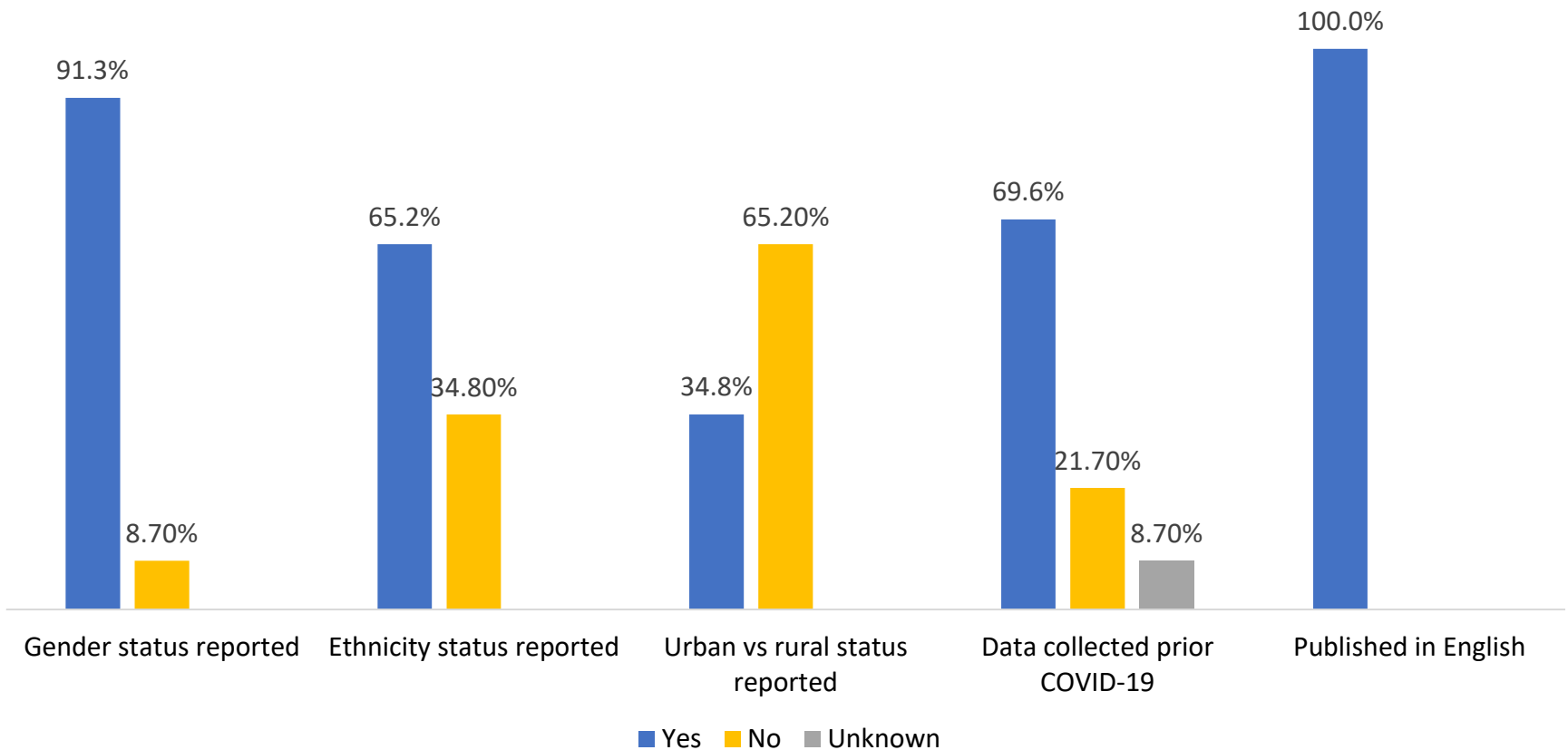
Interventions to Reduce Loneliness among Young Adults (n=17)



Included Studies by Loneliness Measurement Tool (N=23)



Characteristics of Study Sample (N=23)



Key Take-aways



Research assessing the economic implications of loneliness among young adults is at an infancy stage



There is a lack of Canadian literature on economic impacts of loneliness in young adults. The few studies that assessed the impact of loneliness on economic outcomes were done in Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States



Loneliness was found to be directly associated with fewer employment opportunities, lower income, and lower academic achievement



Most interventions to tackle loneliness in young adults use in person delivery methods

Implications for Policy, Practice & Research

- **Supporting policy with scientific evidence**
 - Harness the power of existing data to see the big picture and develop new surveys using standardized tools to measure loneliness
 - Call for new research to investigate the mechanisms through which loneliness affect the direct and the indirect economic outcomes among young adults within Canada
- **Develop programs that encourage the prosocial behavior**
 - Many interventions are associated with a reduction in loneliness, and all encouraged socialization in some form
- **Appoint a high commissioner of loneliness to coordinate the actions**

Next Steps & Knowledge Mobilization Plan

- ✓ Synthesis report and evidence brief (March 28, 2023)
- ✓ SSHRC Forum (Nov. 2022)
- ✓ University of Lethbridge Donor Gala (March 20, 2023)
- ✓ [Prentice Institute Speaker Series](#) (April 26, 2023)
- Canadian Population Society Conference (May 31 – June 2)
- Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation Conference (June 20-23)
- Prentice Institute Research and Knowledge Synthesis Video Series
- Infographic
- Peer-reviewed journals

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- Wigfield et al. (2022, p. 175 (Figure 1)). <https://doi.org/10.1017/S147474642000055X>

Thank you

Merci Beaucoup

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