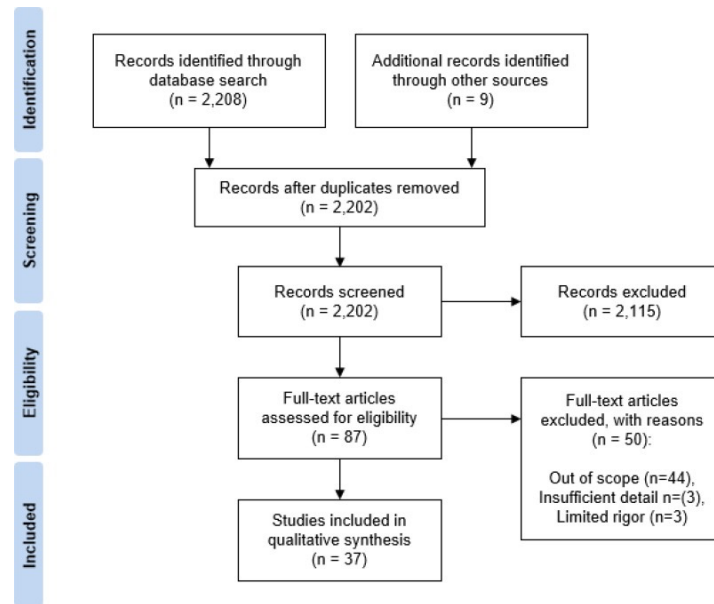# Study Retrieval & Selection

- Save search results in a format that can be used by **reference software** like Endnote or Zotero.

- Remove **duplicate abstracts from multiple databases** to meet the PRISMA guidelines for systematic reviews.

- Keep track of the number of records found and removed for use in the PRISMA flowchart.

- Screen all remaining hits based on their **title and abstract**; remove if studies are clearly not eligible

- Retrieve the **full-texts** and determine if they are eligible.

  - If studies are removed at this stage, the reason for exclusion needs to be documented!

PRISMA flow chart

Study Retrieval & Selection

- At this stage, it is helpful to work with **two independent researchers** to screen the full-texts
- The independent researchers will have to compare their outcomes and discuss any differences. If they cannot agree, a senior researcher will lead the discussion and make the final decision.

docs.metapsy.org/databases/
depression-psyctr/
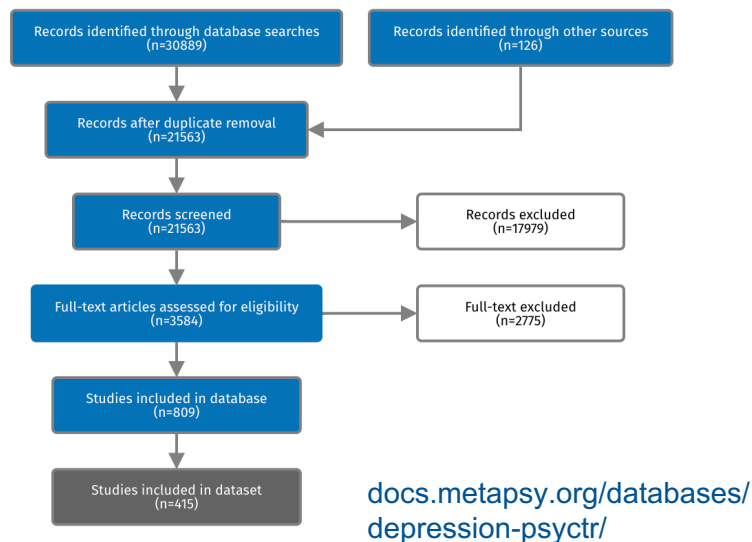
REASONS FOR FULL-TEXT EXCLUSION ▾

- **Companion papers:** n=818
- **Depression is not an inclusion criterion:** n=484
- **Dissertations:** n=21
- **Effect sizes cannot be estimated:** n=92
- **Maintenenance trial:** n=138
- **No control condition:** n=68
- **No psychotherapy for depression:** n=291
- **No random assignment:** n=79
- **Not available:** n=67
- **Other:** n=243
- **Other language:** n=22
- **Protocol paper:** n=335
- **Stepped care/management program:** n=48
- **Studies with chidlren/adolescents:** n=69

Data Extraction

- There are **three major groups of data** to be extracted from included studies: (i) characteristics of the studies, (i) risk of bias or quality assessment data, and (iii) data to calculate effect sizes.

- There are no fixed rules for which characteristics of the studies should be extracted, but **data about the elements of the PICO** (participants, interventions, comparators, and outcomes) should be **collected**.

- **Typically extracted information** for each study includes recruitment methods, how diagnoses were obtained, exclusion criteria, intervention type, number of sessions, intervention format, therapist training and supervision, manual used, and type of control group.

- It is useful to make a table (e.g., in MS Excel) from the start and fill in the cells for each included study while retrieving the data.