**Chatbots and Conversational Agents in Mental Health: A Review of the Psychiatric Landscape**

**Objective**

The primary aim was to explore the current evidence regarding chatbots in psychiatry, focusing on their roles in screening, diagnosis, and treatment of mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and substance abuse.

**Key Findings**

1. **Potential for Mental Health Support:**
   * Chatbots showed significant promise for psychoeducation and self-adherence, particularly in improving psychological well-being and reducing stress.
   * Satisfaction ratings for chatbots were high across studies, indicating their acceptability and usability.
2. **Applications in Therapy:**
   * Chatbots delivered Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) effectively.
   * They assisted in stress management, tracking medication adherence, and providing lifestyle recommendations.
3. **Advantages Over Traditional Methods:**
   * Anonymous interaction with chatbots encouraged sensitive disclosures, particularly in populations hesitant to engage with human therapists (e.g., veterans).
   * Low incidence of adverse events, with only one case of paranoia reported.
4. **Heterogeneity in Implementation:**
   * Various presentation modalities (text, voice, 3D avatars) were used, but preferences and impacts were not systematically studied.
   * Most chatbots lacked standardized designs, which led to inconsistent findings.
5. **Challenges and Risks:**
   * Limited longitudinal studies on chatbot efficacy.
   * Risks of overattachment or parasocial relationships with chatbots.
   * Ethical and privacy concerns regarding data use and lack of comprehensive legal frameworks for chatbot deployment.

**Conclusion**

* **Promising Tool:** Chatbots have the potential to transform psychiatric care through scalable, accessible interventions.
* **Need for Rigorous Research:** The field lacks high-quality evidence, standardization, and long-term impact studies.
* **Future Prospects:** With advancements in AI and ethical frameworks, chatbots could become integral to mental health care.