

Meaning-centred intervention for managing loneliness among community-dwelling older adults: A mixed methods systematic review

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BACKGROUND

Loneliness is linked to poorer health and wellbeing in older adults. Meaning-centred interventions support purpose, value and connection.

OBJECTIVE

To synthesise the effectiveness and experiences of meaning-centred interventions for loneliness among older adults.

METHODS

- Mixed-methods systematic review using the Joanna Briggs Institute framework
- Convergent segregated synthesis
- PROSPERO: CRD42024614173
- Nine databases searched to 31 December 2024; update 7 October 2025

STUDY SELECTION

4,596

citations identified

7

papers included

INCLUDED EVIDENCE

Seven papers represented six studies from Canada, Malaysia, Iran and Spain: three RCTs, two non-randomised studies, one single-group pre-post study and one qualitative study.

PROGRAMMES

- Three group-based logotherapy programmes grounded in Viktor Frankl's theory
- Three group-based reminiscence programmes focused on life review, relationships, spirituality and meaning
- Quantitative samples: 22–45; qualitative sample: 7

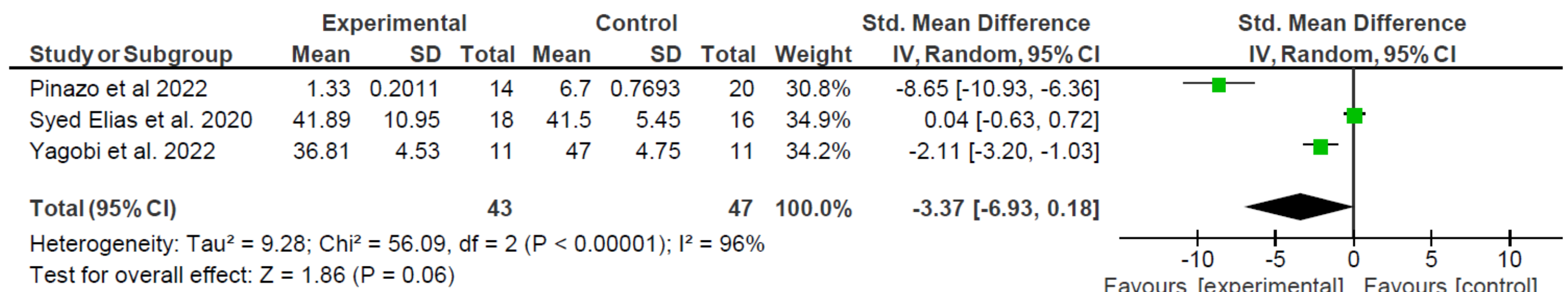
QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Group-based logotherapy

- **Preliminary reductions** in loneliness in quasi-experimental studies ($\eta^2=0.13$)
- Improved depression, anxiety, wellbeing, retirement satisfaction, suicide ideation and hopelessness.

Group-based reminiscence programme

- Meta-analysis showed **no significant difference** between intervention and control groups.



Pooled reminiscence therapy: 3 RCTs, SMD -3.37 (95% CI -6.93 to 0.18), $p=0.06$; $I^2=96\%$.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The only qualitative study found that group delivery supported **social connection**:

- **Structure (function)**: connection across cultural and religious differences, reflection, calm, memory, spending idle time, emotional expression
- **Quality**: respectful sharing, a sense of welcome, enjoyment
- **Number**: Increase connection

INTERPRETATION

Logotherapy is a possible approach, but evidence is preliminary. Group connection was valued, yet the qualitative evidence did not explain how logotherapy works, and how social connection can be translated into meaningful life for older adults. The pooled reminiscence result was uncertain and highly heterogeneous.

IMPLICATIONS

Practice: consider meaning, purpose and social connection together in group support.

Research: conduct RCTs and mixed-methods studies; compare group and individual delivery; describe intervention content and mechanisms; expand qualitative and multilingual research.

CONCLUSION

Group-based logotherapy may help protect older adults against loneliness. Stronger evidence is needed before firm conclusions can be drawn.

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