

Improving identification of mild cognitive impairment and dementia in Parkinson's disease: PDCogniCare Australian Program

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BACKGROUND & AIMS

- Parkinson's disease (PD) is often diagnosed in neurology or geriatric clinics, where motor symptoms are prioritised and cognition is considered secondary.
- The cognitive trajectory of PD spans from early impairments at PD diagnosis, progressing to mild cognitive impairment (MCI), and eventually leading to dementia in advanced stages of PD.

The *PDCogniCare* program aims to develop a technologically advanced solution to enhance the utility of cognitive evaluation for earlier and effective diagnosis of MCI and dementia in PD.

The project consists of four work streams (Figure 1).

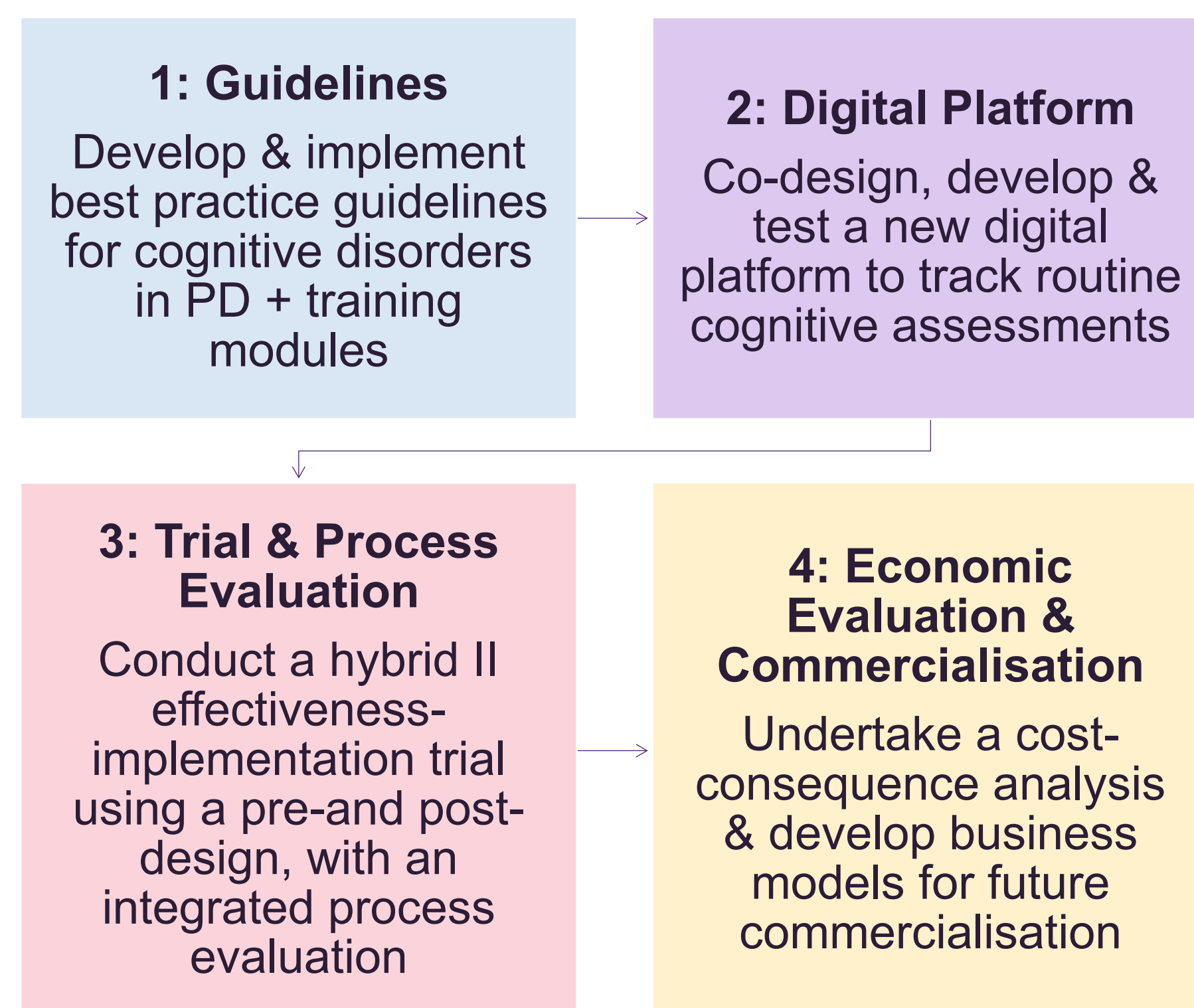


Figure 1: Overview of the *PDCogniCare* Project

METHODS & OUTCOMES

1. GUIDELINE AND TRAINING DEVELOPMENT

- Best practice guidelines for diagnosis and management of cognitive disorders in PD were developed using the evidence-based methodology described in Figure 2.
- A complementary online training program was developed to educate and upskill PD clinicians on best practices.

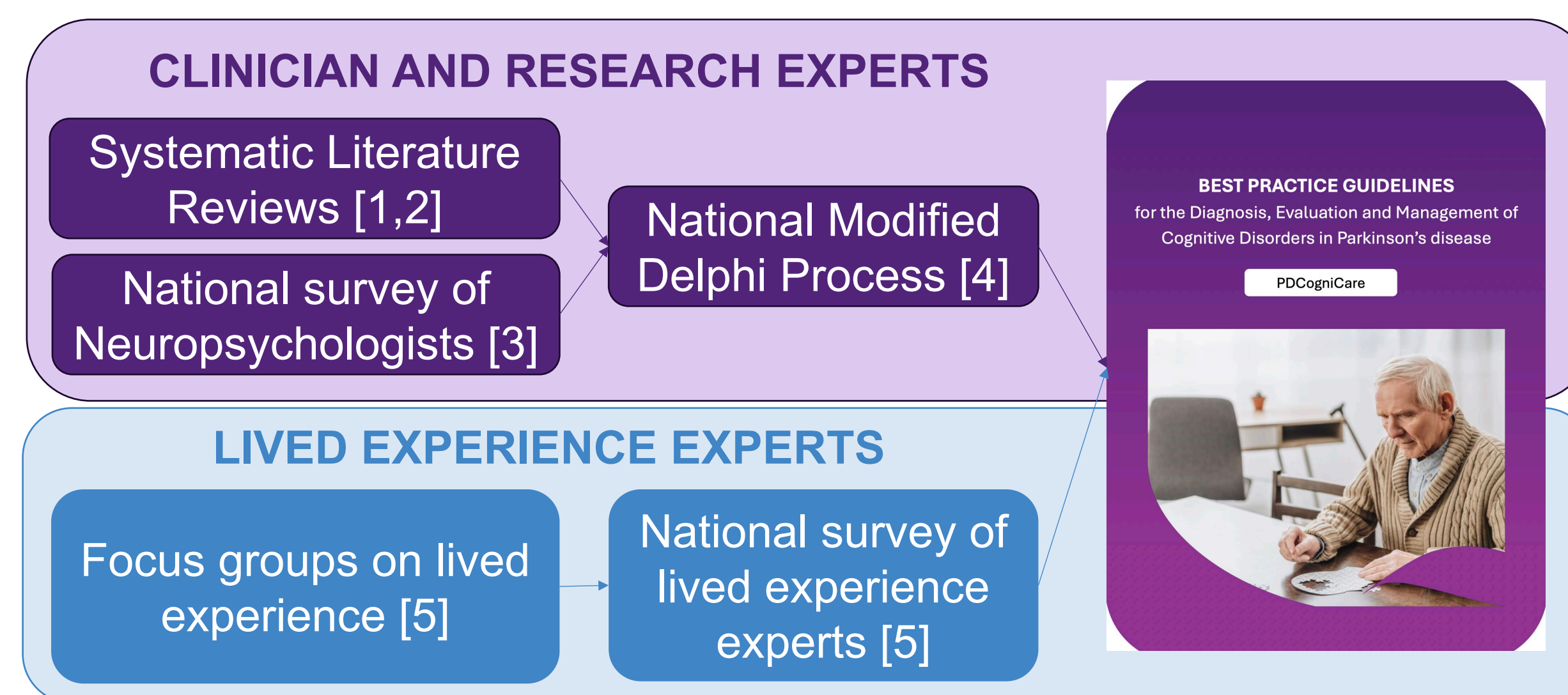


Figure 2: Methods used to develop guidelines

2. DIGITAL PLATFORM (Figure 3)

The *PDCogniCare* platform has been developed using three stages:

- (1) A qualitative contextual inquiry process
- (2) A parallel iterative **co-design** and development process
- (3) Prototype testing

3 & 4. TRIAL, PROCESS & ECONOMIC EVALUATION

- Pre-implementation interviews** identified barriers and enablers for cognitive assessments from clinicians and people with PD [7]
- Pre-post **hybrid II effectiveness-implementation trial** is ongoing (May 2026) to test platform implementation in two hospitals, comparing diagnosis rates before and after 12 months of implementation.
- In-built processes and **economic evaluations** will inform clinical translation and commercialisation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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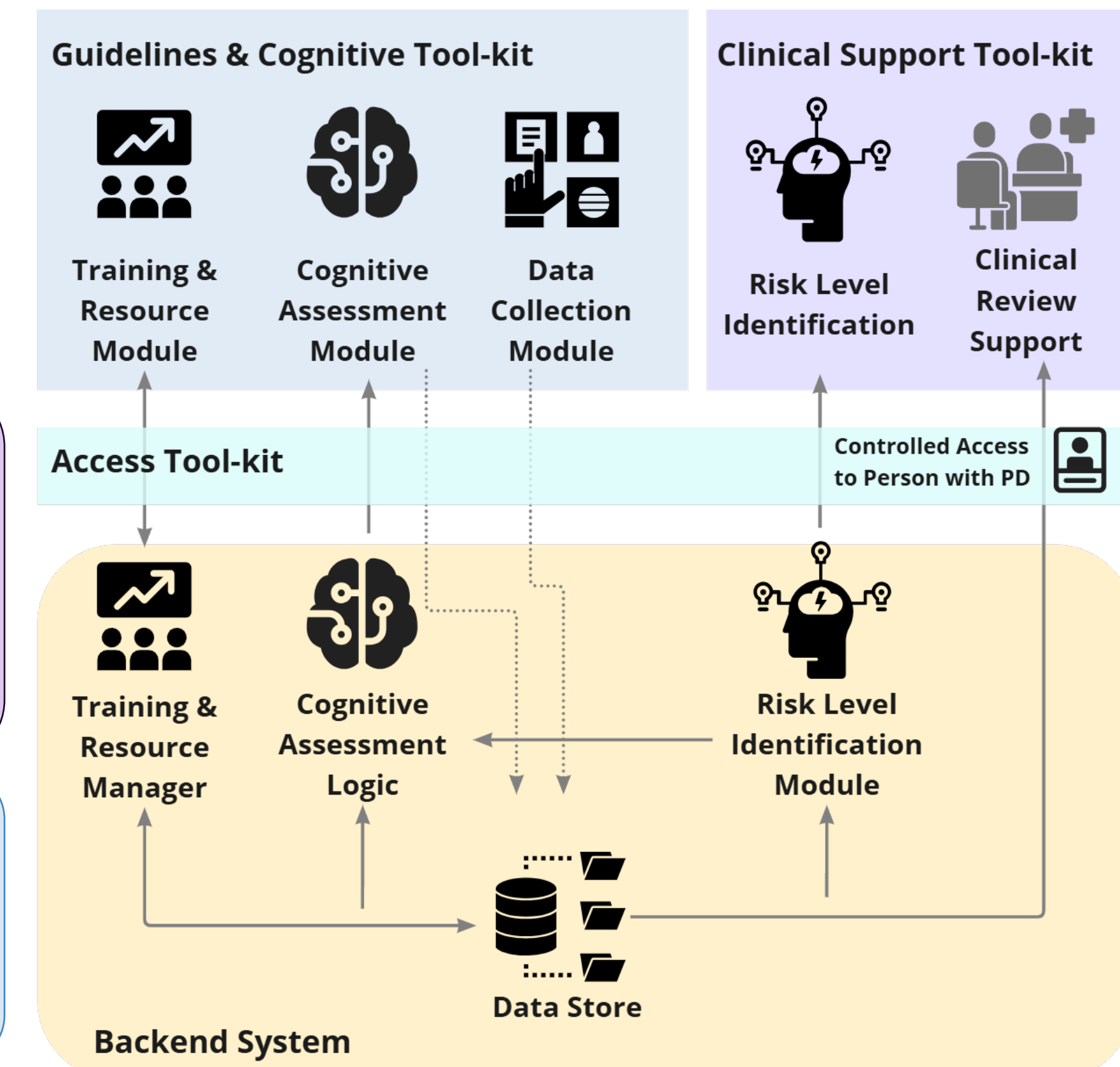


Figure 3: *PDCogniCare* digital platform

CONCLUSION: PDCogniCare aims to improve diagnosis of MCI and dementia in PD. Implementation of the guidelines, training program, and digital platform in clinical practice will:

- Promote evidence-based practice
- Upskill and educate PD clinicians
- Streamline referral and care pathways
- Improve quality of care for people with PD

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