

Fertility and Menstrual Dysfunction in Retired Elite Sportswomen: a Systematic Review

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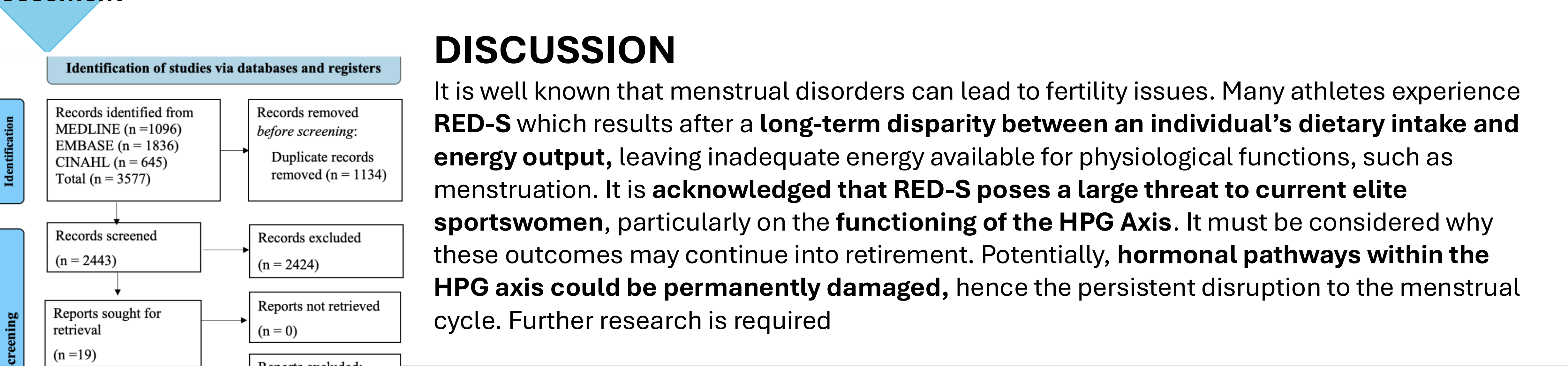
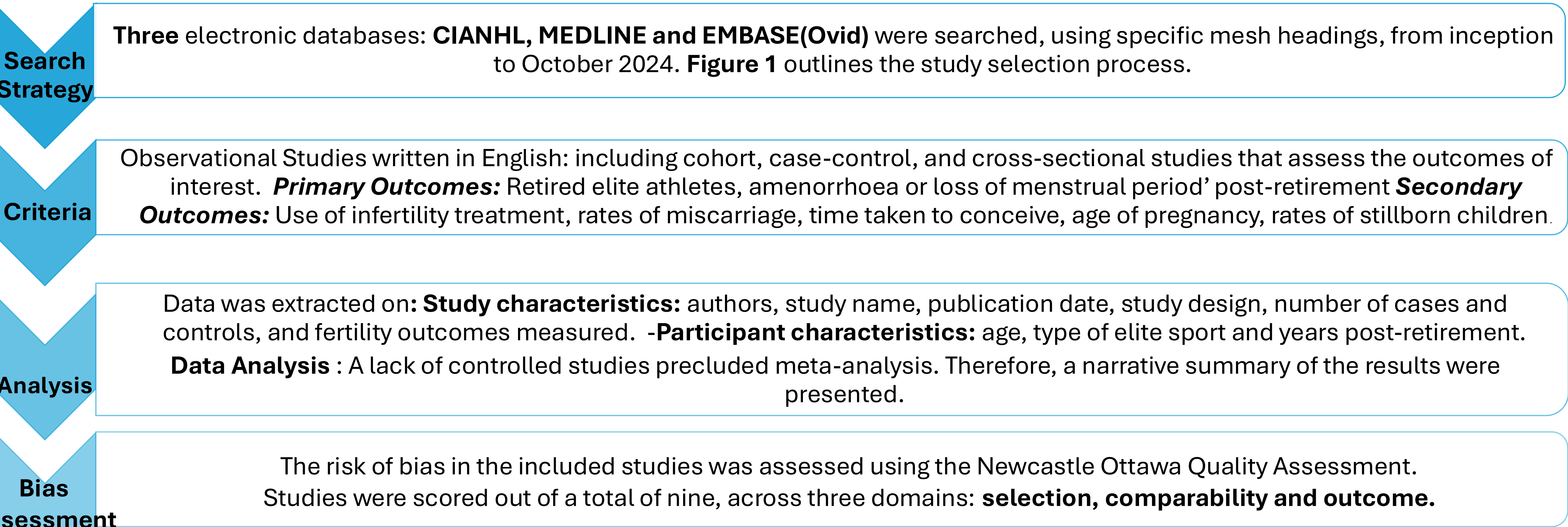
BACKGROUND

It is well known that **menstrual dysfunction and negative fertility outcomes** can be present **during an elite female athlete’s career**. However, the association between an athlete’s menstrual and reproductive **health post-retirement** from elite sport is unclear. Therefore, there is a need for research to discern whether menstrual dysfunction and negative fertility outcomes can **continue into retirement from elite sports**.

AIM

The aim of this study is to understand **the impact that participation in elite sport** can have on the **menstrual and fertility outcomes of sportswomen post-retirement from competition**

METHOD

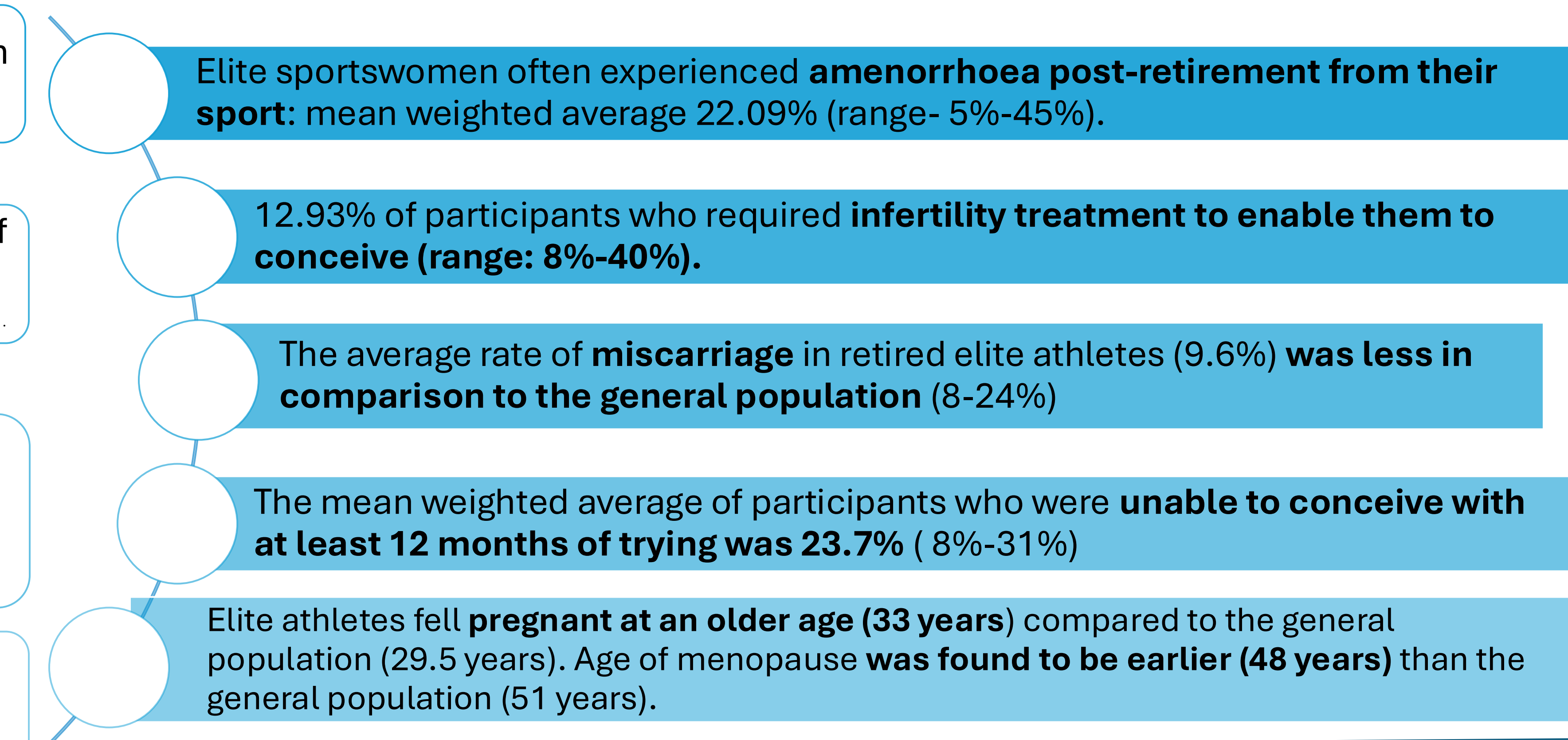


DISCUSSION

It is well known that menstrual disorders can lead to fertility issues. Many athletes experience **RED-S** which results after a **long-term disparity between an individual’s dietary intake and energy output**, leaving inadequate energy available for physiological functions, such as menstruation. It is **acknowledged that RED-S poses a large threat to current elite sportswomen**, particularly on the **functioning of the HPG Axis**. It must be considered why these outcomes may continue into retirement. Potentially, **hormonal pathways within the HPG axis could be permanently damaged**, hence the persistent disruption to the menstrual cycle. Further research is required

Figure 1 **PRISMA Flow Diagram** for the Study Selection Process

RESULTS



CONCLUSION

There is growing awareness of the **menstrual status and fertility outcomes of retired elite sportswomen**, yet many questions remain regarding the **cause of these long-term effects**. Key factors include **the relationship between RED-S, low-body fat percentages, menstrual disorders and their persistence past retirement**. As research progresses, it is hoped that **targeted care pathways will be developed** to support the improvement of elite sportswomen’s reproductive health both **during and after their participation in elite sport**.

REFERENCES

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IMPLICATIONS

