

Screening for Early Identification of Mental Health Issues in Seniors: The Development of an Evidence-Based, Standardized, User-Friendly Toolkit for Use in the Primary Care Setting



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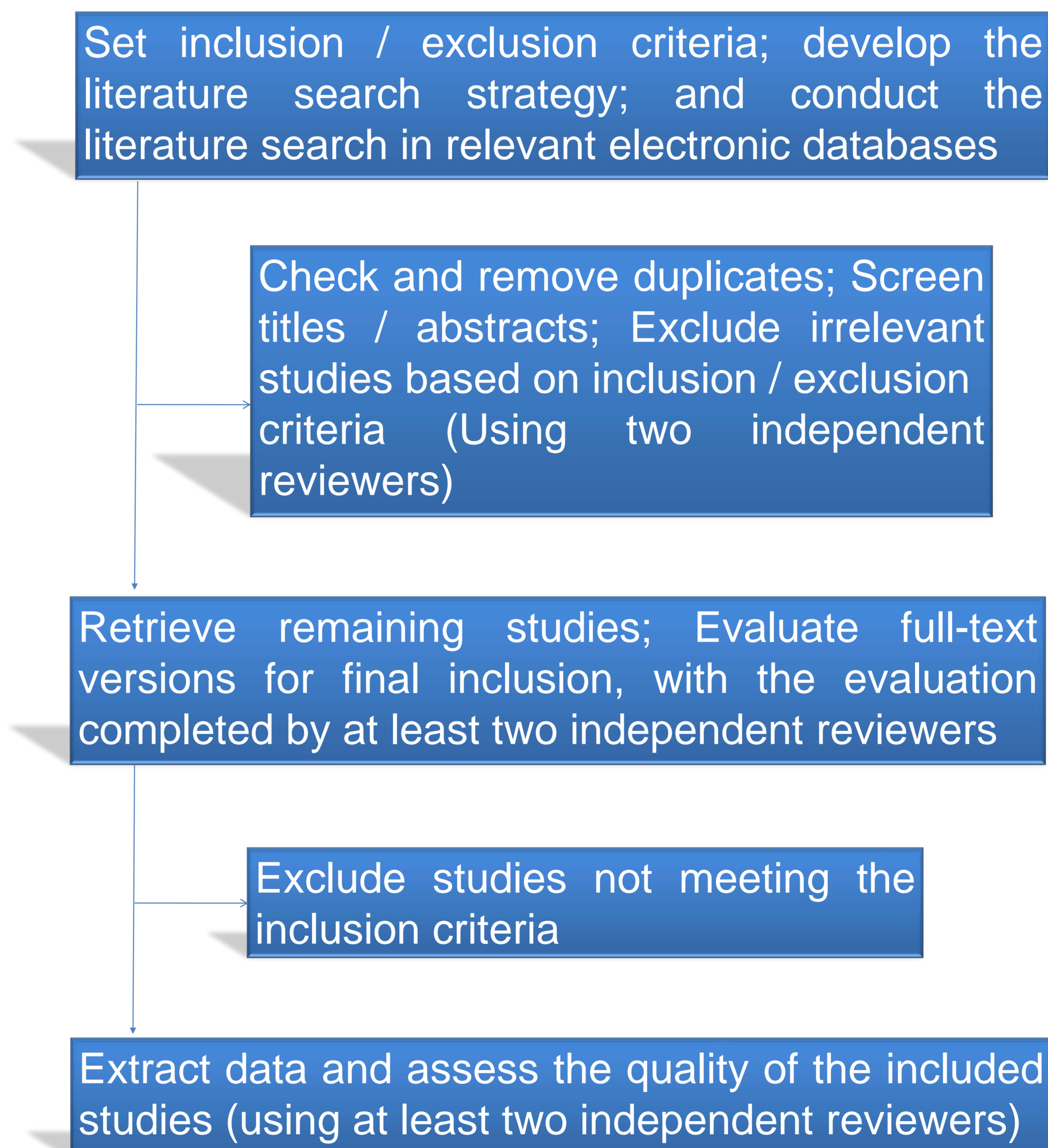
Introduction

- There is a high prevalence of mental disorders in the senior population, with one in five Alberta seniors treated annually for mental health issues¹.
- Due to aging of the baby boomers, the prevalence rate of mental health disorders is anticipated to increase significantly over the next several decades¹.
- In Alberta, the top five mental health/addiction disorders for seniors are:
 - Anxiety
 - Dementia
 - Depression
 - Psychosis
 - Substance use disorder
- Recent evidence suggests that most mental health services for seniors are provided in primary care or long term care²; however, the identification rate of these disorders in the primary care setting is low.
- Our goal is to create a standardized screening protocol for the identification of mental health disorders in seniors for use in the primary care setting, with the overall goal of increasing detection and providing more timely intervention for mental health disorders in this population.



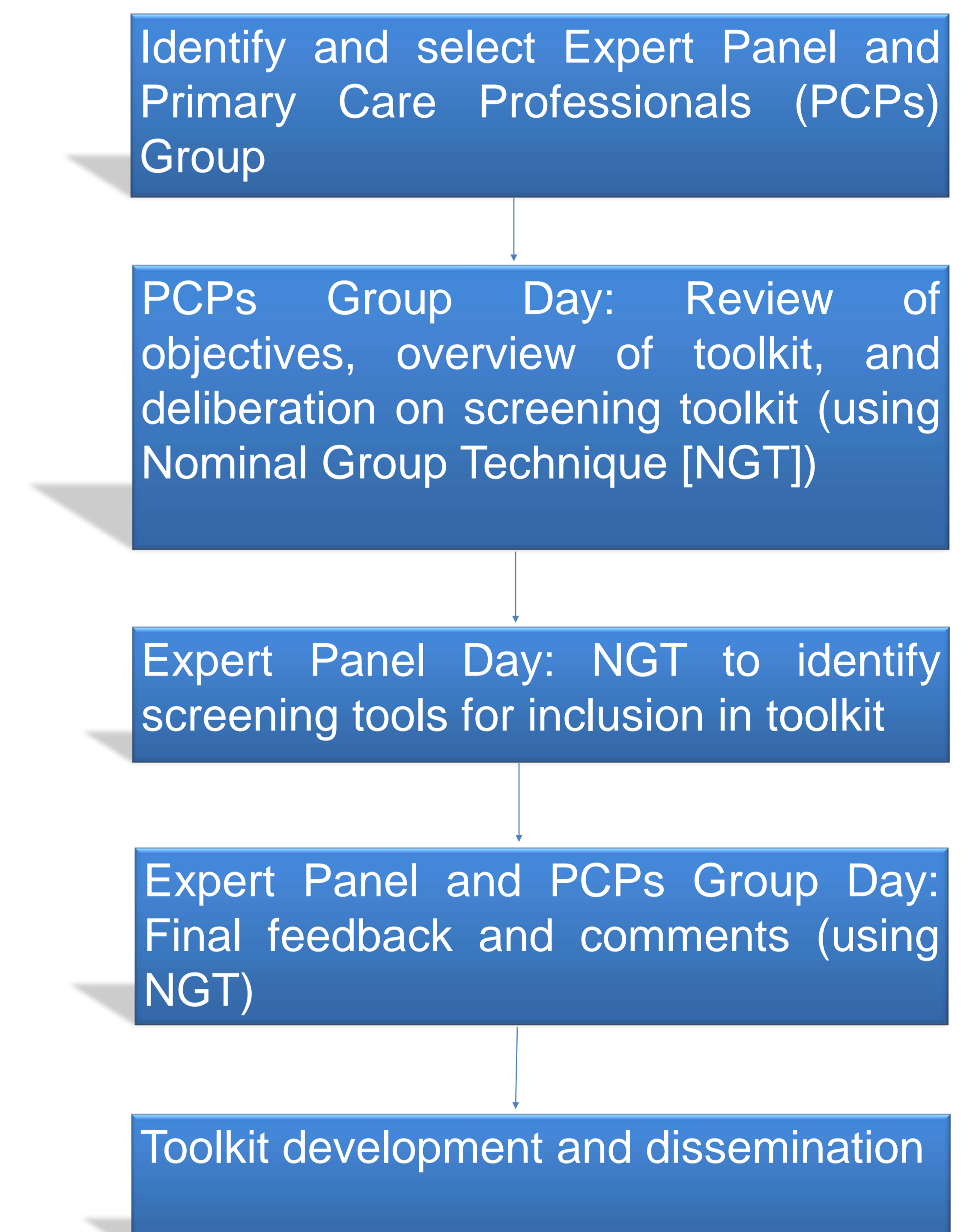
Phase 1

Method – Systematic Reviews



Phase 2

Method – Toolkit Development Process



Objectives

- To develop a standardized, user-friendly toolkit (containing screening tools for the top five mental health disorders) for early identification of mental health issues in seniors for use in both rural and urban primary care settings in Alberta.
- To foster future uptake of the toolkit by using a community-based research approach to enhance knowledge translation and facilitate the translation of research findings into policy and practice.

Knowledge Translation

- Once developed, the screening toolkit will be disseminated to health care professionals throughout Alberta.
- It is anticipated that the use of the community-based research approach throughout the toolkit development process will enhance knowledge translation and will facilitate rapid uptake of research findings into policy and practice.
- It also is anticipated that through the active involvement of practitioners and policy makers in the development of the toolkit, there will be early buy-in and successful implementation of the toolkit in the clinical setting.

References:

1. Statistics Canada. (2006). *A portrait of seniors in Canada*. Ottawa, ON: Author.
2. Canadian Collaborative Mental Health Initiative Secretariat. (2006). *Establishing collaborative initiatives between mental health and primary care services for seniors: A companion to the CCMHI planning and implementation toolkit for health care providers and planners*. Mississauga, ON: Canadian Collaborative Mental Health Initiative.

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