A Scoping Review of Interventions and Recommendations for Enhancing Work Ability and Facilitating Return-to-work in People with Long COVID

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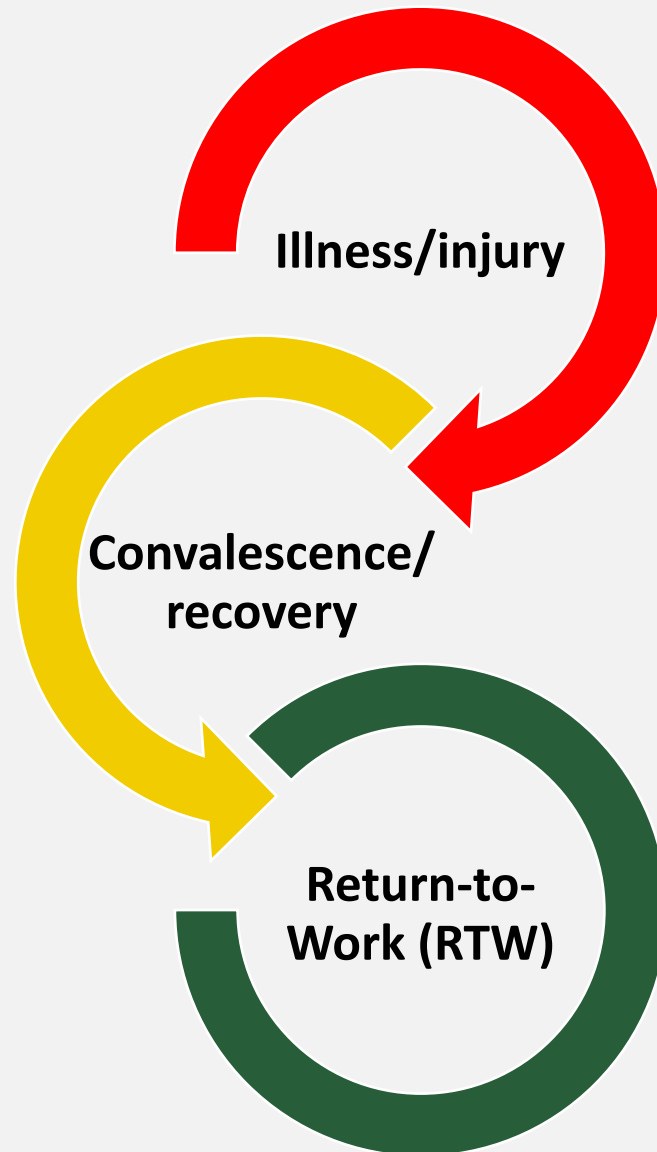
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Expected Return-to-Work Pathway

Return-to-Work in People Living with Long COVID

https://rcni.com/long-covid-pacing

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Objectives

- Synthesize evidence on return to work (RTW) interventions and recommendations for people living with Long COVID.

- Identify 'promising' approaches for enhancing work ability and RTW.

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Scoping Review Steps

Search
- Embase, MEDLINE, CINAHL, BASE, CENTRAL, PsycINFO, OAIster, MedRxiv + Grey literature
- Up to Nov 07, 2023 (**n=2056 articles**).

Selection
- Inclusion/exclusion criteria applied to titles/abstracts (**n = 177 articles**)

Charting
- Inclusion/exclusion criteria applied to full text of articles and data extraction (**n=62 articles**)
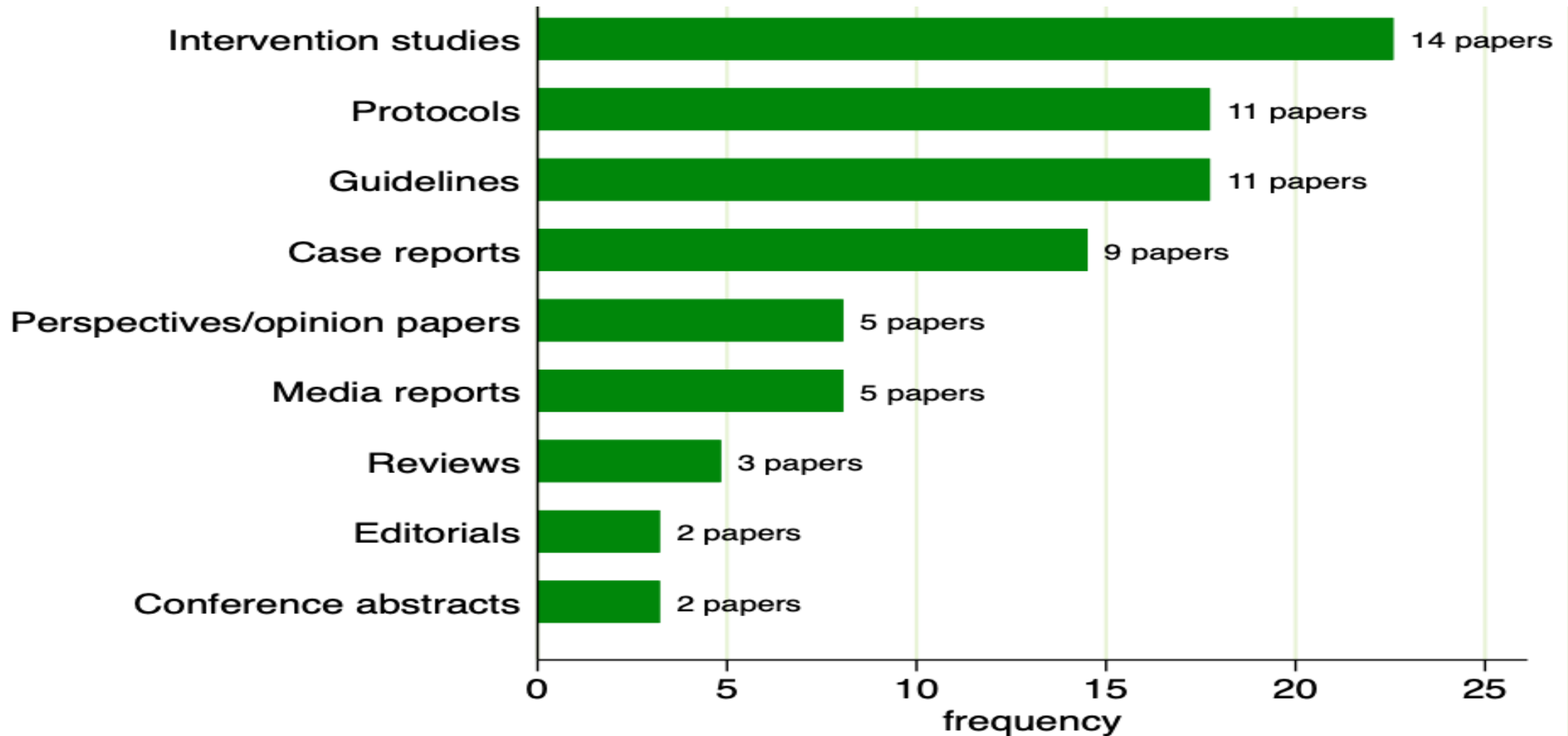
Collating
- Quantitative and qualitative studies on RTW interventions
- Guidelines/recommendations on RTW for people with Long COVID

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Figure 1. Design of Included Studies
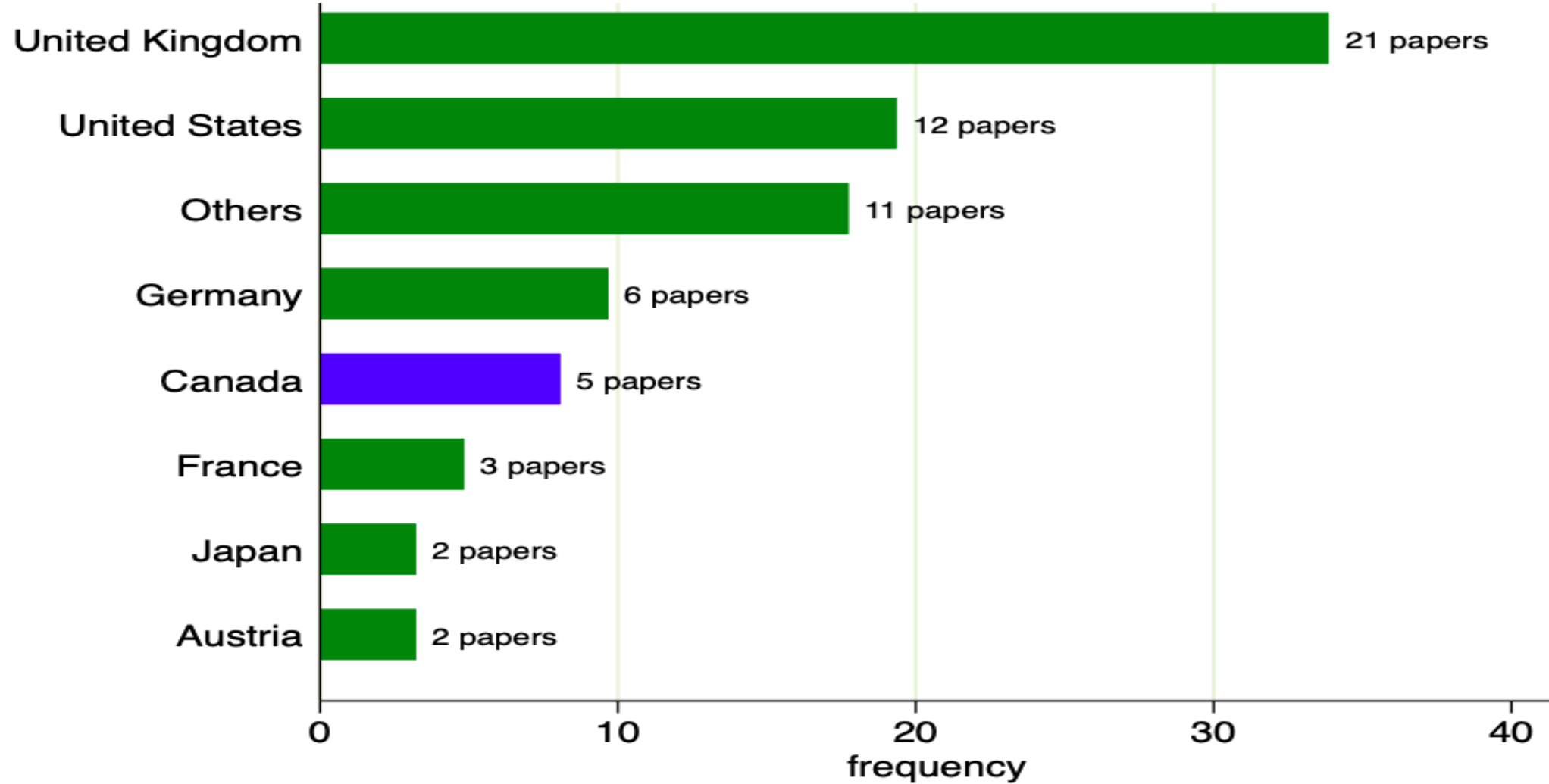
Figure 2. Studies by Country

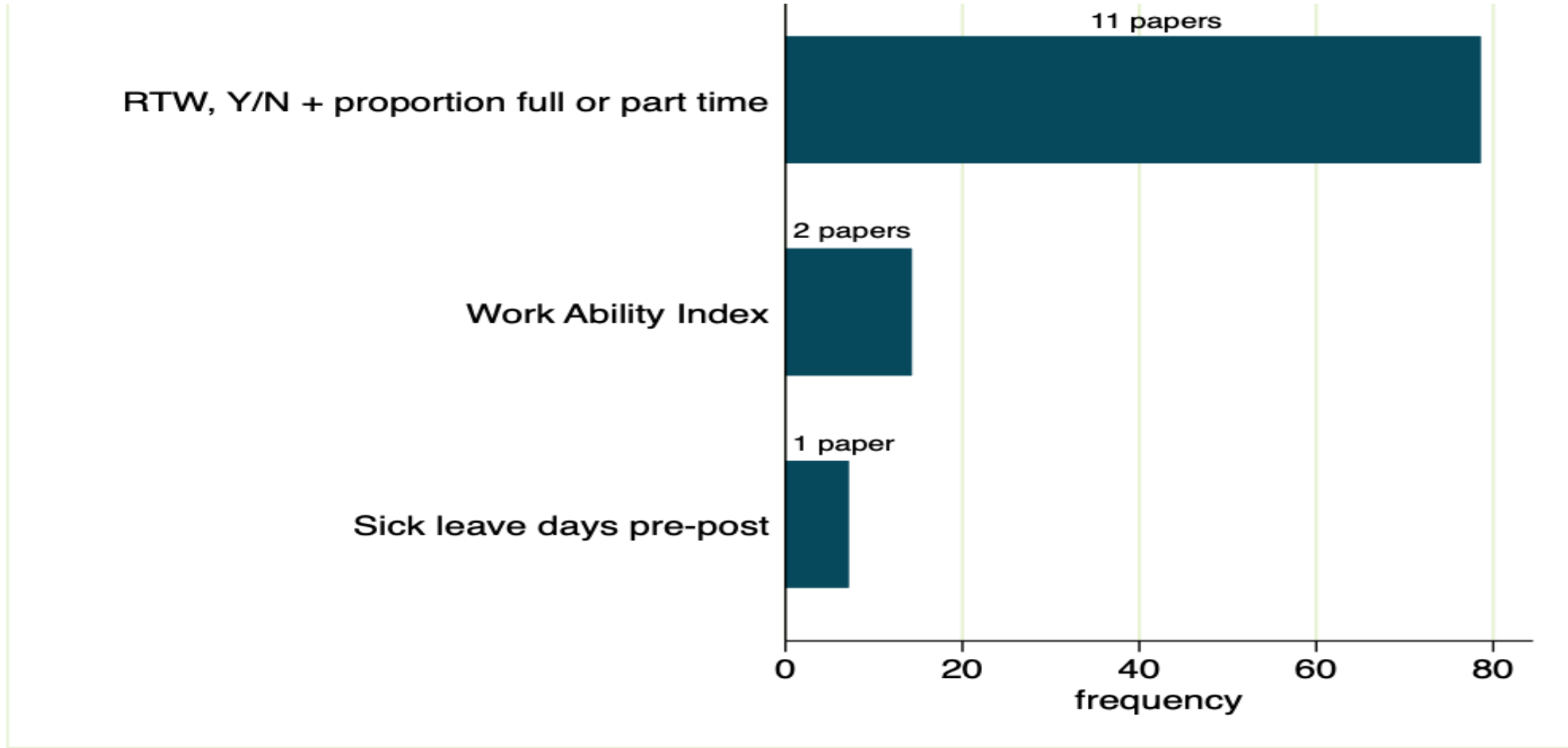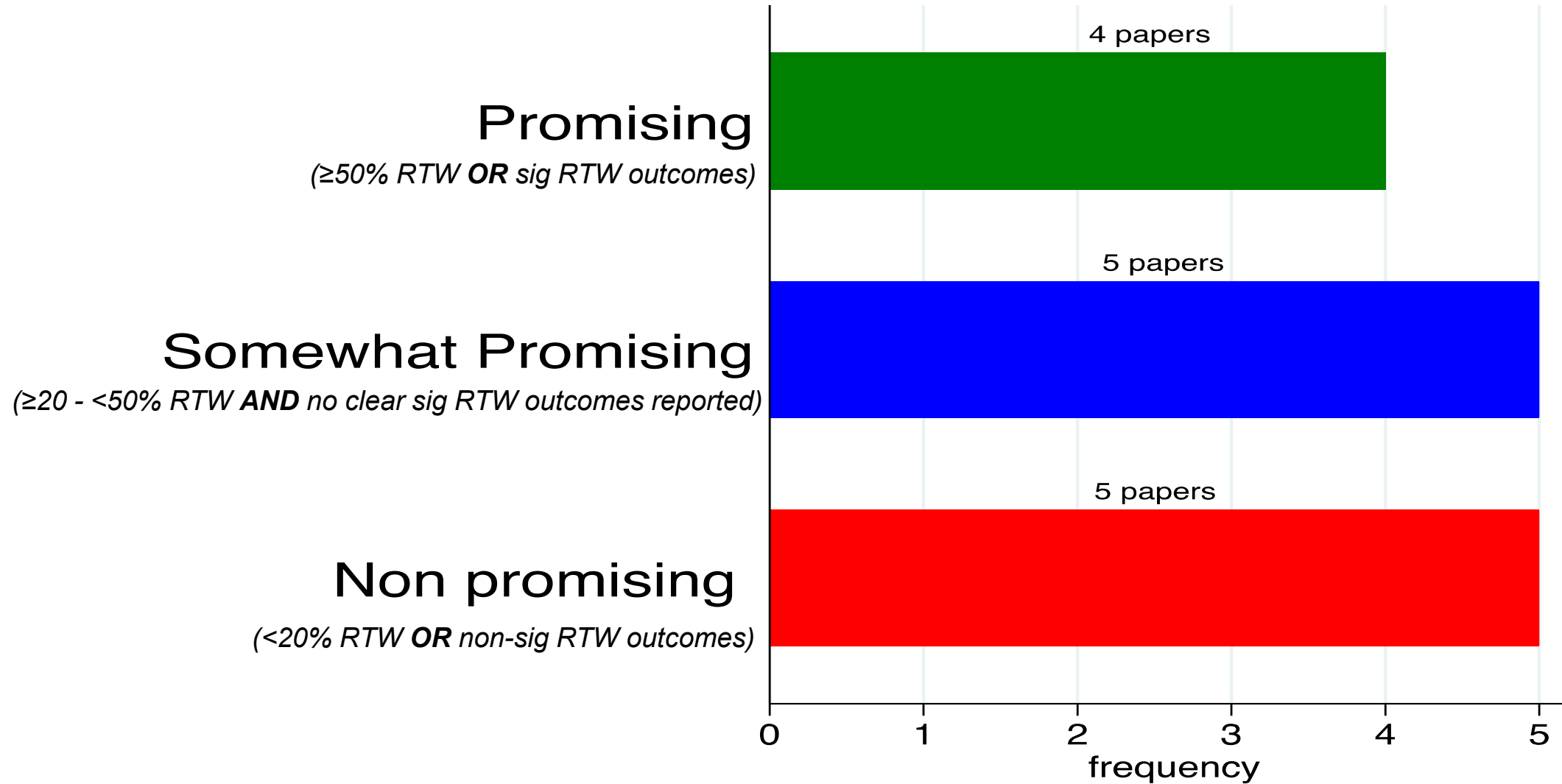# Figure 3. Summary of RTW Outcomes in Intervention Studies

Figure 4. Categories of Intervention Studies

Summary of 'Promising' Interventions

- **Diverse Interventions:**
    Multidisciplinary or multimodal rehabilitation.

Program Components:
    Psychoeducation, pacing, breathing strategies, tailored physical activity, and medication management.

Intervention Duration:
    Ranged from 3 days to 5 weeks.

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Summary of Recommendations for RTW

- **Individualized Support:**

    Tailored assistance considering unique needs and circumstances, with active involvement of the individual is crucial for a successful RTW.

- **Workplace Accommodations:**

    Gradual and extended RTW process often required due to unpredictable Long COVID symptoms.

- **Critical Role of Managers**:

    Supportive managers who actively listen and facilitate accommodations play a key role.

- **Intervention Programs:**

    Multidisciplinary involvement.

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Conclusions

- RTW and remaining employed for people living with Long COVID remains complex.

- Appropriate workplace interventions must be tailored to each individual in a timely manner.

- Likely several understudied factors that come into play.
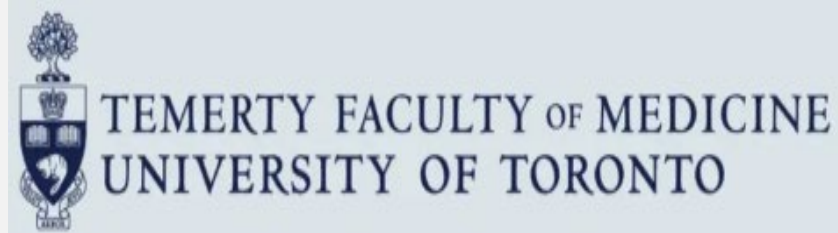
- Change in occupation may be required.

Thank you

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Questions

Characteristics of 'promising' interventions

Frisk et al. 2023: A safe and effective micro-choice based rehabilitation for patients with long covid: Results from a quasi-experimental study

Micro-Choice Based Rehabilitation (n=78; 19-67 years): Longitudinal study

Mean pre-treatment symptom duration: 10.2 ± 4.8 months.

Duration: 3-day micro-choice based rehab program with 7-day and 3-month follow-up

Core components:
- Patient education
- Individually tailored exercise on breaking inflexible patterns
- Physical activity/exercise training
- Brief mindfulness sessions

Focus shift: From symptom monitoring to facilitating increased physical activity and functioning through micro-choices.

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Characteristics of 'promising' interventions
Altmann et al 2023. Pulmonary recovery directly after COVID-19 and in Long-COVID

Multimodal COVID-19 rehab program (n=21 Long COVID): Quasi-experimental

Pre-treatment symptom duration: mean of 10.1 months [Range: 4-20 months].

Program components:
- Educational support and group conferences.
- Access to Long-COVID ambulatory care app (MyMEDIAN@Home) and websites.
- Detailed coaching for RTW.
- Device-based breathing therapy and monitoring of O2 sats.
- Medication management with Prednisolone and Colchicine.
- Psychological counseling/meditations and psychiatric appointments as needed.
- Attention to social needs post-discharge.

Intervention duration: 4-5 weeks.

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Characteristics of 'promising' interventions

Multidisciplinary post-COVID occupational rehabilitation program (n=81; age mean 48.9 ± 10.5 years): descriptive cohort study of an intervention program.

Mean pre-treatment symptom duration: 165.2 ± 73 days.

Program components:
- Psychoeducational
- Pacing and energy conservation guidance
- Breathing strategies
- Tailored activity or exercise interventions

Intervention duration: 49.9 ± 12.5 days

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Characteristics of 'promising' interventions

Sathyamoorthy et al. 2022 Enhanced external counterpulsation for management of symptoms associated with long COVID

Enhanced External Counterpulsation (EECP) for Long COVID (n=16; mean age: 53.8 ± 15.3 years): Retrospective cohort study.

Mean pre-treatment symptom duration: 8.3 ± 3.6 months

Program components:
- EECP: 1 hour sessions for 35 sessions or a modified regimen of 15 sessions.

Findings:
- Initial trial utilized 15 sessions as proof-of-concept.
- 25 to 35 sessions may ultimately be the most suitable.
- Improvement in brain fog symptoms observed in all patients.

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