

Assessing diversity and inclusivity is the next frontier in mental health recovery narrative research and practice

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Abstract

Demand for digital health interventions is increasing in many countries. The use of recorded mental health recovery narratives in digital health interventions is becoming more widespread in clinical practice. Mental health recovery narratives are first-person lived experience accounts of recovery from mental health problems, including struggles and successes over time. Helpful impacts of recorded mental health recovery narratives include connectedness with the narrative and validation of experiences. Possible harms include feeling disconnected and excluded from others. Diverse narrative collections from many types of narrators and describing multiple ways to recover are important, to maximize the opportunity for service users to benefit through connection, and to minimize the likelihood of harm. Mental health clinicians need to know whether narrative collections are sufficiently diverse to recommend to service users. However, no method exists for assessing diversity and inclusivity of existing or new narrative collections. We argue assessing diversity and inclusivity is the next frontier in mental health recovery narrative research and practice. This is important but methodologically and ethically complex. In this viewpoint article, we evaluated one diversity and two inclusivity assessment methods. The diversity assessment method used Simpson's Diversity Index. The two inclusivity assessment methods were based on comparator demographic rates and arbitrary thresholds. These methods were applied to four narrative collections as a case study. Refinement needs to be made regarding a narrative assessment tool, practicality and cultural adaptation.

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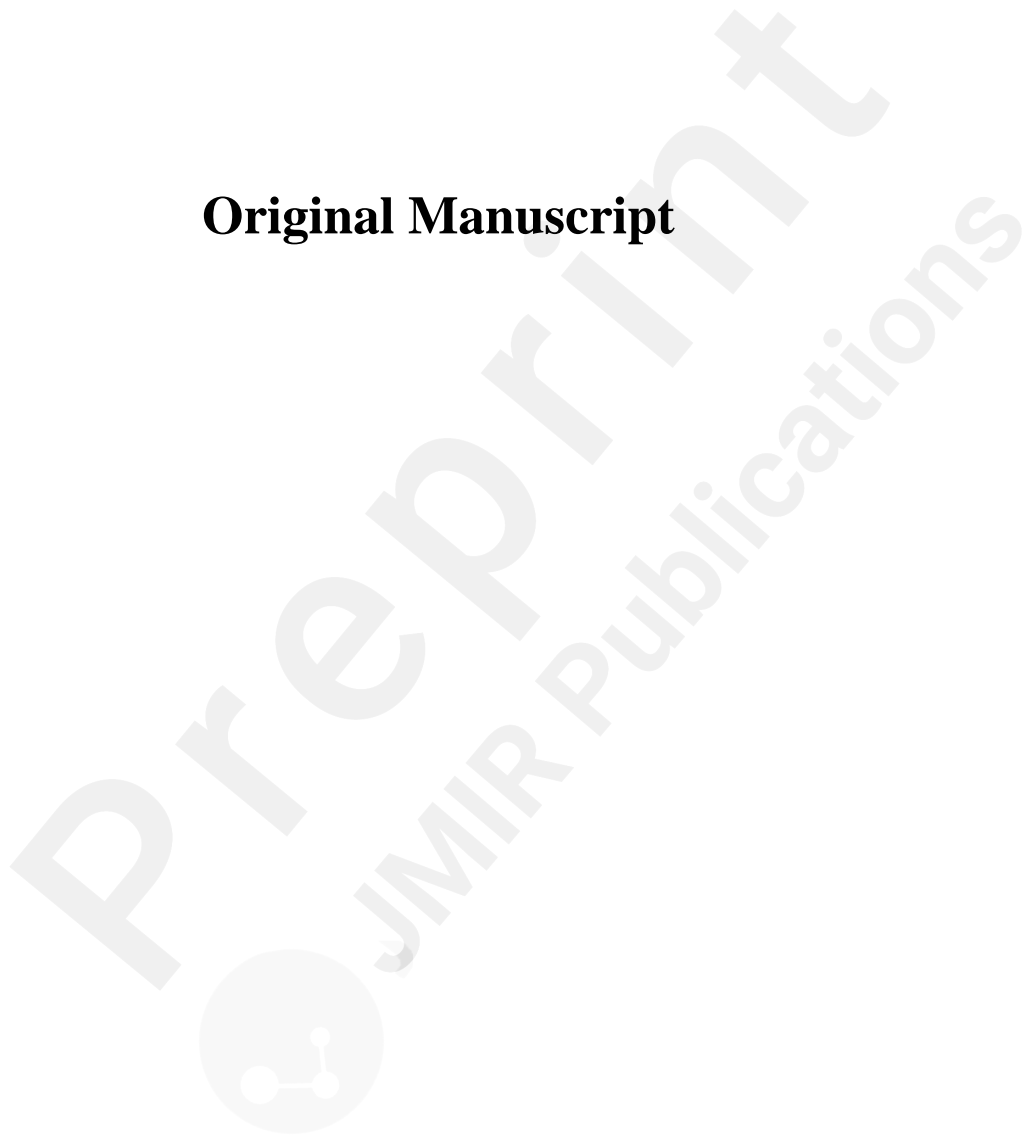
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Original Manuscript



Assessing diversity and inclusivity is the next frontier in mental health recovery narrative research and practice

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Abstract

Demand for digital health interventions is increasing in many countries. The use of recorded mental health recovery narratives in digital health interventions is becoming more widespread in clinical practice. Mental health recovery narratives are first-person lived experience accounts of recovery from mental health problems, including struggles and successes over time. Helpful impacts of recorded mental health recovery narratives include connectedness with the narrative and validation of experiences. Possible harms include feeling disconnected and excluded from others. Diverse narrative collections from many types of narrators and describing multiple ways to recover are important, to maximize the opportunity for service users to benefit through connection, and to minimize the likelihood of harm. Mental health clinicians need to know whether narrative collections are sufficiently diverse to recommend to service users. However, no method exists for assessing diversity and inclusivity of existing or new narrative collections. We argue assessing diversity and inclusivity is the next frontier in mental health recovery narrative research and practice. This is important but methodologically and ethically complex. In this viewpoint article, we evaluated one diversity and two inclusivity assessment methods. The diversity assessment method used Simpson's Diversity Index. The two inclusivity assessment methods were based on comparator demographic rates and arbitrary thresholds. These methods were applied to four narrative collections as a case study. Refinement needs to be made regarding a narrative assessment tool, practicality and cultural adaptation.

Keywords: recovery narrative; web-based mental health interventions; inclusivity; diversity; collective action; curation

Introduction

Background

Demand for digital mental health interventions (DMHIs) has been increasing in many countries [1]. For example, 76% of the Australian general public are interested in using DMHIs [2], and US\$2.4 billion were invested in these interventions in 2020 alone in the USA [3]. A Singaporean mental health app, Intellect, is now used by over 3 million people in 20 mostly Asian countries [4]. A large-scale education program about ethics in DMHIs has been launched [5], and more active use of DMHIs is expected in Africa [6]. The advantages of DMHIs include accessibility, cost-effectiveness, and personalization [7], which can address key barriers for mental health recovery such as low help-seeking and stigma associated with mental health problems [8]. Effectiveness of DMHIs has been generally reported in diverse populations (e.g., children, young people, older adults, university students, healthcare workers, people with neurodevelopmental disabilities) and on diverse mental health experiences [2, 9-12]. DMHIs have become an important domain in medical internet research [13-15].

Recorded mental health recovery narratives (RRNs) have been used in DMHIs. Mental health recovery narratives can be defined as “first-person lived experience accounts of recovery from mental health problems, which refer to events or actions over a period of time, and which include elements of both adversity/struggle and of self-defined strengths/successes/survival” [16]. Whilst narratives can be shared in person, such as when a peer support worker tells their story [17], RRNs are those presented in recorded formats such as written texts, audio, and videos. RRNs are often disseminated online [18], and have been used in a range of clinical and societal interventions [19]. For example, the Narrative Story Bank was created by the Scottish Recovery Network to inspire hope and offer tools and technologies for recovery [20]. Content from the Narrative Story Bank helped to inform Scotland’s mental health strategy [21]. In Scotland, the use of recovery narratives has been incorporated into clinical practice, such as the production of written RRNs to support self-reflection [21]. Similarly, RRNs have been used in clinical training to enhance communication skills and empathy of healthcare workers [22]. RRNs are used in national anti-stigma campaigns [23], which aim to reduce stigma associated with mental health problems [24].

The impact of RRNs on recipients has been evaluated. For example, students who listened to recovery narratives of people with anorexia nervosa showed more understanding of the mental illness and a less stigmatized view towards these individuals [25]. Eating disorder memoirs offered validation of personal experience and created a positive affective response among people with eating difficulties [26]. Helpful outcomes of accessing both live and recorded recovery narratives include connection with others, validation of own experiences, empowerment, hopefulness, gratitude, and stigma reduction [27]. Mechanisms of impact from RRNs include comparison with the narrative and narrator, learning about the experiences of others, and feeling empathy, all of which create a sense of connection [28]. Accessing RRNs can thus support personal recovery, by increasing hope, meaning and a sense of fulfillment [18, 29].

RRNs are often grouped and presented as collections [19], which have been presented on bespoke websites [30] and in books composed of recovery narratives linked by a theme such as psychosis [31] or men’s eating disorders [32]. The people who assemble RRN collections do so for a range of reasons, including providing education about mental health and recovery, supporting others in their recovery journey, and campaigning for change in health service provision [33].

Clinicians who use RRNs as part of treatment need to know the possible impact of the RRN collections they recommend to their service users [34]. Given their broad range of clinical applications, the ability to characterize a narrative collection is important, because not all RRNs are helpful to all people. An interview study reported that recovery narratives can be harmful if recipients feel disconnected from the narrative, resulting in distancing themselves from the narrator [27]. For instance, if a “right” way to recover is communicated by the RRNs, this implicit message can cause a recipient to feel disconnected [35, 36] if that particular pathway is in some way ‘outside’ that person’s scope, experience and perspective. A feeling of being disconnected is detrimental because connection is the central mechanism supporting recovery after access to RRNs [28, 37].

Diversity and Inclusivity

Providing diversity in RRN collections may be one approach to maximizing benefit and minimizing harms, enabling a sense of connection to people with different backgrounds and experiences. A diverse set of narratives will increase the opportunity for the recipient to feel connected to a narrative [38]. Further, a lack of diversity in RRN collections may give rise to stereotyping [39], leaving recipients feeling excluded and disconnected [18] or suggest that there is only one way or a “right” way to recover [35, 40] which may not fit with their own beliefs, experiences and needs. Recipient characteristics and narrative characteristics moderate the impact of a narrative on a sense of connection [28]. For example, people in ethnic minority groups felt a lower level of connection when a RRN collection marginalized these groups [41]. Diverse narratives are needed to ensure that recipients from different backgrounds and with different identities have the greatest opportunity to feel connected with both a narrative and a narrator, as both types of connection are known to maximize the positive effects of RRNs [39]. One exception might be collections of RRNs targeted at specific groups experiencing structural inequalities or marginalization (e.g., refugees), where the selection of narrators who belong to those groups might be an appropriate strategy for maximizing beneficial impact.

Two types of variation in a narrative collection can be differentiated: diversity and inclusivity [42]. **Diversity** is defined as heterogeneity in narrative characteristics, such as a spread of narrator demographics and ‘protected characteristic’ identities as defined by the Equality Act 2010 (e.g. age, gender, sexual orientation) or types of narrative content (e.g. trajectory, genre). **Inclusivity** is defined as representativeness of narrative characteristics in relation to a broader population [43].

Diversity and inclusivity concepts can be applied to a specific characteristic of an RRN collection, such as narrator age or narrative focused on a certain demographic characteristic (e.g., race, disability). Diversity is present when there are a meaningful number of narratives within each sub-category [44]. For example, diversity in narrator age is present when there is a spread of younger, middle-aged, and older narrators. Diversity is a feature of the collection, so a diversity metric will be a constant for a given collection. By contrast, inclusivity is present when the proportion of narratives within each sub-category is similar to the proportion in a wider comparison population at a given time [45]. For example, inclusivity in narrator age is present when there are similar proportions of each narrator age group in the collection and in a comparison population, such as other people on the caseload of the mental health service, or in the general population. Inclusivity is a function of the collection when used in a specific context, so an inclusivity metric will vary based on context.

We argue assessing diversity and inclusivity of narrative collections is the next frontier in mental health recovery narrative research and practice. A tool to characterize individual RRNs has been developed. The Inventory of Characteristics of Recovery Stories (INCRESE) is a standardized 77-

item instrument characterizing narrative mode, narrator and narrative characteristics, content warnings, turning points and narrative content [46]. Whilst INCREASE is used to characterize individual RRNs, no method currently exists to assess the diversity and inclusivity of an RRN collection.

We now discuss aspects of measuring diversity and inclusivity in recovery narrative collections. The Narrative Experiences Online (NEON) study has used INCREASE to characterize a large collection of 687 recovery narratives, with ethical approval from a UK National Health Service Research Ethics Committee (West London and GTAC, 18/LO/0991). Because we had a large dataset of narrative characteristics measured using INCREASE available to us, we used this dataset in the analysis.

What are the relevant characteristics?

To develop diversity and inclusivity metrics, characteristics for the evaluation of diversity and inclusivity need to be identified. To establish a theoretical and cross-culturally valid understanding of important diversity and inclusivity characteristics, we analyzed policy and research in order to identify characteristics agreed internationally as requiring protection from discrimination. Three data sources were used. First, national policy documents relating to equality, diversity and inclusivity were reviewed, to identify characteristics protected by law in each country. Policy documents were collated from a purposive sample of 20 predefined countries shown in Table 1, chosen for variation in (a) region, (b) income level as classified by the World Bank and (c) status as a Western, Educated, Individualized, Rich and Democratic (WEIRD) versus non-WEIRD country [47] (see Supplementary File 1 for income levels and WEIRD/non-WEIRD status). Policy documents were retrieved using Google searches with the terms “anti-discrimination [country]” and “human rights [country]”. At least one source of information was identified for each country. Where the governmental information was not available in English (e.g. Iran, Yemen, Morocco), online sources such as information websites (e.g. The Academic Network of European Disability Experts, Human Rights Watch, European Commission, International Labour Organization) or reports (e.g. Human Rights Committee report, Human Rights Watch report) written in English about protected characteristics in the country were reviewed. The identified characteristics were grouped, and Table 1 shows the frequency across the 20 countries of the 13 identified characteristics protected by law and policy.

Table 1. Characteristics (n=13) protected by law and policy in 20 countries

Characteristic :	Sex and gender	Beliefs	Origin	Family	Disability	Sexuality	Age	Economics	Employment	Pregnancy	Education	Language	Military veteran
Components:	Sex Gender	Religious Political Philosophical	Race Ethnicity Migration	Marriage Carer				Social class					
Australia	x		x		x	x	x		x				
Brazil	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x			
Cuba	x	x											
Greece	x	x	x	x					x				
Guyana	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x			
Iran	x	x	x			x						x	
Ireland	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					
Italy	x	x	x					x				x	
Japan	x	x	x	x				x			x		
Libya	x	x	x										
Morocco	x	x		x									
Netherlands	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				
Norway	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x			
Palestine	x	x	x		x						x		
Spain	x	x	x		x								
Suriname	x	x	x					x			x	x	
Tunisia	x		x		x			x					
United Kingdom	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x			
United States	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x			x
Yemen	x	x	x	x				x					

20 18 17 11 10 8 8 8 5 5 3 3 1



Some characteristics collapse complex and contested components, where terms are used inconsistently internationally. For example, “Sex and gender” refers to both biological sex assigned at birth and the social construct gender, with sub-categories including “Female”, “Male” and “Non-binary” [48]. Therefore, the theme is categorized as “Sex and gender” [49].

The five characteristics with the highest international consensus are Sex and gender (e.g. assigned sex at birth, socially constructed gender, Female/Male/Non-binary), Beliefs (e.g. political, religious, philosophical), Origin (e.g. race, ethnicity), Family (e.g. marital status, carer responsibilities), and Disability (mental, physical, learning and sensory).

To maximize cross-cultural validity, four multinational documents were reviewed, comprising two international human right treaties (Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)), and two relevant systematic reviews about diversity and inclusivity [50, 51]. The presence of each of the 13 identified characteristics in these four documents was tabulated to identify the most widely agreed characteristics relevant to diversity and inclusivity (Table 2). In both tables, the authors YK and FN independently reviewed the documents and discussed rating until consensus was reached, which was then confirmed by the other authors.

Table 2. Candidate diversity and inclusivity characteristics mapped against international treaties and systematic reviews

Characteristic	UDHR Article	CRPD Article	Yadav & Lenka [50]	Manoharan & Singal [51]
Sex and gender	x	x		x
Beliefs	x	x		
Origin	x		x	x
Family	x	x		x
Disability		x		
Sexuality			x	
Age		x	x	x
Economics	x	x		
Employment	x	x		
Pregnancy				
Education	x	x		
Language	x			x
Military veteran				

All characteristics apart from “Pregnancy” were identified by at least one of the four sources. Finally, to maximize relevance to mental health recovery narratives, a systematic review making recommendations for best practice in curating mental health lived experience narrative collections was assessed [39]. “Positioning” was added as a mental health narrative-specific characteristic to assess if a collection includes both positive and negative narratives about mental health services, to capture whether a broad range of perspectives are included [39]. In total, these 14 characteristics were identified as relevant to the diversity and inclusivity of RRN collections.

Mapping against a narrative characterization tool

To enable an assessment of the appropriateness of INCREASE in assessing diversity and inclusivity, the 77 INCREASE items were mapped against the 14 diversity and inclusivity

characteristics (Table 3).

Table 3. INCREASE items mapped against the diversity and inclusivity characteristics

Characteristic	Corresponding INCREASE items					
Sex and gender	11 Gender					
Beliefs	71 Activism		72 Spiritual/religious activities			
Origin	13 Ethnicity		15 Location			
Family	49 Family		53 Relationships		74 Caring responsibilities	75 Family experiences of mental health issues
Disability	17 Visual difficulties		18 Hearing difficulties	19 Mobility/stamina difficulties	20 Cognitive difficulties	21 Self-care difficulties
Sexuality	16 Sexuality					
Age	12 Age					
Economics	54 Income		55 Housing			
Employment	56 Work					
Pregnancy	48 Pregnancy/birth					
Education	51 Education					
Language						
Military veteran						
Positioning	32 Positioning					

Twenty-two INCREASE items were able to be mapped against the diversity and inclusivity characteristics. No INCREASE items were identified relevant to the characteristics of Language and Military veteran. Twelve characteristics, including all five most supported characteristics and Positioning, can be measured using the INCREASE items. Our INCREASE database enabled a preliminary investigation of diversity and inclusivity, despite INCREASE not being a perfect tool for assessing them. It may be refined in the future by including items regarding language and military status.

Quantifying each characteristic

To quantify the diversity and inclusivity of RRN collections, each characteristic needs to be assessed using its sub-categories (e.g., for the Sex and gender characteristic, the INCREASE characterization choices of “Male”, “Female” and “Other” may be the sub-categories). Measuring diversity involves characterizing the spread of narratives across each sub-category. For example, an RRN collection that includes no narrator categorized as “Other” in the Sex and gender characteristic is less diverse than an RRN collection that does include such narrators. By contrast, measuring inclusivity involves establishing the same two parameters of characteristics and sub-categories, and additionally identifying the comparison population. For example, presence of an Origin category of “White” may not increase an inclusivity metric in the UK general population as much as it does in many other populations.

Measurement of diversity and inclusivity

We present one option for measuring diversity and two options for measuring inclusivity for recovery narrative collections. The two options for measuring inclusivity have different properties, enabling people assessing inclusivity to make a choice over which to use.

Measuring diversity: Simpson's Diversity Index

Simpson's Diversity Index (SDI) is an established index used in the natural sciences to assess biodiversity [44]. SDI considers the number of species present and the abundance in each species, in order to indicate the variance in species. SDI is calculated by deducting the Simpson's Index (SI) from 1, where $SI = \sum n(n-1) / N(N-1)$. When used to assess narrative collection diversity in relation to a particular characteristic (e.g. "narrator gender"), n means the total number of narratives within each option of the characteristic (e.g. "female narrator") and N means the total number of narratives across all options. See Supplementary File 2 for example calculations. SDI ranges from 0 (low diversity) to 1 (high diversity).

Measuring inclusivity option 1: demographic rates as comparison population

Inclusivity captures the extent to which minority groups in a comparison population (e.g., a country population, a service user cohort at one mental health service) are included in a collection [52]. One approach to assess inclusivity is to identify the categories which are minoritized in the comparison population, and compare their proportion in the narrative collection. For example, the Origin characteristic is measured by INCREASE item 13 "Ethnicity", with categories of "Not identifiable", "Asian", "Black/African/Caribbean", "Dual/multiple ethnic group", "Other ethnic group", and "White". When used in the UK, all choices apart from "White" are minority groups (a limitation of this categorization is that some "White" communities, such as the Traveller, Gypsy and Roma community, are also very socially excluded). In the UK, 13% of the population are non-White [53]. In a collection, among all narratives, if the ratio of non-White narratives is higher than 13%, the collection can be considered as inclusive with respect to ethnicity in the UK. If inclusivity is being assessed in a different comparison population, such as a different country, then alternative choices for minority categories would be made.

Measuring inclusivity option 2: arbitrary threshold as benchmark

A second approach to measuring inclusivity is to set an arbitrary benchmark. One approach is to decide that five narratives are enough to satisfy a benchmark for a certain characteristic. A stronger approach, as often used for external examination in the university sector [54, 55], is to decide both a minimum rate (e.g. 10%) and number (e.g. 5), and choose whichever is greater.

Case study

The three methods above were applied to the Narrative Experiences Online (NEON) Collection as a case study. Four characteristics matching INCREASE items were considered: Sex and gender, Origin, Disability, and Positioning. The NEON Collection is a curated collection of mental health RRNs. All narratives are included in the NEON Collection with permission [56]. Each narrative is characterized using INCREASE by multiple raters [46].

The candidate approaches were applied to four groups: the entire NEON Collection, two of the larger collections chosen for difference in source, and the individual donations contained in the NEON Collection. In September 2022, the NEON Collection comprised 687 narratives compiled from 34 public collections and from individual donations. One of the two larger collections, which we call in this paper "Statutory Service" (78 narratives), was compiled by a statutory mental health service. The other, we call in this paper "Ethnic Minority Book" (19 narratives), was published as a book focusing on the mental health of ethnic minority groups. Individual donations (n=29) comprised narratives collected directly from individuals as

donations to the NEON Collection.

To evaluate diversity using SDI, because the Origin and Disability characteristics consist of multiple INCREASE items, the mean SDI scores were calculated. The SDI scores for each collection group are shown in Table 4.

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Table 4. Diversity scores for Sex and gender, Positioning, Origin and Disability using Simpson's Diversity Index

Characteristic	Sex and gender	Positioning	Origin			Disability					
			Ethnicity	Location	Mean	Visual	Hearing	Mobility	Cognitive	Self-care	Mean
INCREASE Item	Gender	Positioning	Ethnicity	Location	Mean	Visual	Hearing	Mobility	Cognitive	Self-care	Mean
NEON Collection	0.58	0.61	0.58	0.70	0.64	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.04
Statutory Service	0.60	0.56	0.07	0.50	0.37	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.07	0.05	0.03
Ethnic Minority Book	0.29	0.56	0.61	0.20	0.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.02
Donations	0.64	0.53	0.46	0.57	0.52	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.01

Bold figures = Mean scores where multiple INCREASE items are attached to one characteristic.

Of the four groups assessed, the NEON Collection is the most diverse in terms of Positioning, Origin and Disability. Individual donations are the most diverse in terms of Sex and gender. Statutory Service is the most diverse in the Cognitive difficulties, a sub-characteristic of the Disability characteristic. Ethnic Minority Book is the most diverse in Ethnicity, a sub-characteristic of the Origin characteristic.

To evaluate inclusivity using option 1 (demographic rates), the comparison population used was the UK general population. The Positioning characteristic was excluded as there is no demographic data of narrative positioning available. Minority groups in each characteristic were identified, and the proportion of narratives from each minority group was calculated. The proportion of minority groups in the comparison UK general population were obtained for gender [57], ethnicity [53] and each disability component [58-62]. For Location, the number of British nationals living outside Europe was identified, then the proportion against the UK population was calculated [63]. For Self-care, the prevalence of self-neglect was identified [62]. The findings are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Inclusivity option 1: minority group proportions compared to the UK general population

Characteristic	INCREASE item	Response categories		Proportion of minority narratives (%)				Minority proportion in UK general population (%)
		Non-minority	Minority	NEON Collection	Statutory Service	Ethnic Minority Book	Donations	
Sex and gender	Gender	Not identifiable Female Male	Other	1	0	0	0	3
Origin	Ethnicity	Not identifiable White	Asian Black/African/Caribbean Dual/multiple ethnic group Other ethnic group	10	0	47	0	13
	Location	Europe	Africa Asia Australasia North America South America	36	0	3	3	7
Disability	Visual difficulties	Not identified	Yes	0.4	0	0	0	3
	Hearing difficulties	Not identified	Yes	0.3	0	0	0	17
	Mobility	Not identified	Yes	3	1	0	0	46
	Cognitive difficulties	Not identified	Yes	4	4	0	3	2

Self-care	Not identified	Yes	2	3	5	0	0.2
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Bold figures = Above proportion in UK general population

The NEON Collection met the inclusivity benchmark of being above the UK general population for the Location in the Origin characteristic, and two sub-characteristics in the Disability characteristic: Cognitive difficulties and Self-care. Likewise, Statutory Service met the inclusivity benchmarks for Cognitive difficulties and Self-care. Ethnic Minority Book met the inclusivity benchmarks for Ethnicity in the Origin characteristic and Self-care in the Disability characteristic. Individual donations met the inclusivity benchmark for Cognitive difficulties. No collections met the inclusivity benchmarks for the Sex and gender characteristic, and the Disability sub-characteristics of Visual difficulties, Hearing difficulties, and Mobility. The largest inclusivity score was for Ethnicity in Ethnic Minority Book, followed by Location in the NEON Collection.

To evaluate inclusivity using option 2 (arbitrary threshold), benchmarks were set at a minimum proportion of 10% of the number of narratives in a collection and a minimum number of 5 narratives. Whichever was the higher number was used as the threshold, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Inclusivity option 2: arbitrary thresholds

Characteristic	Sex and gender	Origin		Disability					Positioning
		Ethnicity	Location	Visual	Hearing	Mobility	Cognitive	Self-care	Positioning
INCREASE Item NEON Collection (n=687) Threshold: n=69	Gender 4	69	245	3	2	18	26	17	97
Statutory Service (n=78) Threshold: n=8	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	5
Ethnic Minority Book (n=19) Threshold: n=5	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	1	4
Individual Donations (n=29) Threshold: n=5	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	2

Bold figures = Above threshold

The NEON Collection met the inclusivity benchmarks for both Ethnicity and Location in the Origin characteristic and the Positioning characteristic. Ethnic Minority Book met the inclusivity benchmark for Ethnicity in the Origin characteristic. Neither Statutory Service nor Individual donations met any of the characteristics nor sub-characteristics. Similar to the inclusivity option 1, the scores for Location in the NEON Collection and Ethnicity in Ethnic Minority Book markedly exceeded the benchmarks.

Strengths and limitations of each approach

Simpson's Diversity Index

A strength of calculating the diversity scores using SDI is practicality; to calculate SDI only the frequencies for each characteristic are required [64]. Less practical measures exist. For example, the Shannon Diversity Index is another established biodiversity index, which requires more data such as a rate of each species present out of the total organism population [65]. Likewise, the Social Choice Methods were proposed in computer science, however the methods require more data than SDI (e.g., social structures of power and influence) [66].

Three major weaknesses need to be noted. One is that there are no interpretation scores to indicate a level of the diversity in SDI (e.g., high, medium, and low). Another limitation is reliance on INCREASE data, which do not map onto all protected characteristics identified. There are no INCREASE items for language and military status. Moreover, even where an INCREASE item and a characteristic have the same label, the meaning may be different. For example, in this analysis, we chose an INCREASE item for Location as part of the Origin characteristic. However, the response choices of this item are placed at a global level (e.g., Europe, Asia, Africa) whereas the international treaties and national policies often regard the location of where people are from or live at a local level (e.g., housing discrimination in the UK [67] and “buraku” (roughly defined as a defiled area) in Japan [68]). Both items and response choices in INCREASE can be extended to enable calculation of the diversity from the INCREASE dataset. Lastly, whilst appealing as a simple and comprehensible metric, it may misleadingly simplify the complex issue of diversity. For example, the diversity scores should not be treated as a target, which can be deprioritized once hit [69]. The diversity scores should be used as part of helping recipients from different backgrounds and with different identities feel connected with both a narrative and a narrator, maximizing the positive effects of RRNs [39].

Inclusivity option 1

A strength of inclusivity option 1 is that it is a logical approach, comparing the proportion between a collection and its comparable population. This method allows a direct comparison with different contexts as far as the demographic data are available, and tailors the assignment of minoritized status to categories to the comparison population.

Weaknesses include the time required, modest collection sizes, and comparator choice. Firstly, the inclusivity option 1 requires more time than the option 2, because of the difficulties with finding the comparable data. There would be a health service resource allocation implication of choosing option 1 rather than option 2. Busy practitioners may not have time to identify comparable demographic data. For example, for Self-care, finding the demographic proportion of people with self-care difficulties required a great amount of time. We used the demographic proportion of people suffering from self-neglect. Self-care difficulties and self-neglect may be similar, however self-neglect can indicate a wider set of behaviors than self-care, such as hoarding and unwillingness to receive support [70, 71]. Secondly, RRN collections often do not have many narratives, e.g., the largest collection in

the NEON Collection includes 78 narratives. Only a few narratives can meet the benchmarks in small collections. For example, in Ethnic Minority Book ($n=19$), only one narrative is enough to meet the benchmarks for the sub-characteristics of Gender, Visual, Cognitive and Self-care difficulties, despite them having different demographic proportions. Lastly, a decision needs to be made on what an appropriate comparator is for this method. We used the UK general population, however if a statutory mental health service uses this method, the entire cohort of their service users may be more meaningful as a comparative tool. Identifying a meaningful comparator and retrieving comparison information may be complex [72].

Inclusivity option 2

Strengths of inclusivity option 2, based on the arbitrary threshold, include practicality and representation. This approach allows a reasonable minimum number to be present, addressing the need for individuals from minority communities to “see themselves” [73] in the narrative collection.

However, weaknesses include the difficulty in justifying the benchmark numbers. Relatedly, it produces a binary outcome: the collection is either inclusive in a particular characteristic or it is not. This does not differentiate between a collection that just meets the benchmark versus one that markedly exceeds it.

Overall, the diversity and inclusivity of the NEON Collection are higher than the three sub-groups. One explanatory attribute is its size, as the three sub-groups are part of the NEON Collection. Because the size is large, the NEON Collection has an inherent advantage with respect to diversity [74]. The more narratives a collection has, the more likely the collection has different types of narratives. The size advantage also relates to the high inclusivity of the NEON Collection. The NEON Collection marked low yet above-benchmark scores in the characteristics where the benchmarks were low, whereas the other three collections did not (e.g. scored a zero; no relevant narrative identified).

Our case study has three implications. First, the diversity and inclusivity can be measured, though each metric has limits on its meaningfulness. For example, the diversity metric has no interpretation scores to indicate a level of the diversity. Inclusivity option 1 highlights a mismatch between INCREASE items and characteristics, and a question about what an appropriate comparator is. Inclusivity option 2 requires justification for the benchmark. Second, larger collections in general are more diverse and inclusive. Third, collections which have a specific focus, e.g., on ethnicity, can be differentiated using these metrics.

Finally, how the output is presented needs to be discussed. A challenge with all measurement approaches is how to present the results [75]. One approach is a radar chart, used in the Four Layers of Diversity Model [76]. For example, the Sex and gender, Origin (Ethnicity and Location) and Positioning characteristics can be presented as in Figure 1. The items in the Disability characteristic were excluded as all five items included a zero, which is already visible in the table format.

[Please insert Figure 1 about here]

One advantage of the radar chart is that the uniqueness of each collection can be visually highlighted [77]. Moreover, compared to a table format, chart formats such as a radar chart are often more reader-friendly and inclusive, e.g., for people with dyslexia [78, 79]. A

disadvantage is that not many characteristics can be included to maintain a reader-friendly presentation [77].

Conclusion

Several knowledge gaps exist. First, there is a mismatch between the INCREASE items and the identified characteristics. Candidate new items for INCREASE are language and military veteran. Moreover, there are currently only three characterization choices for sex and gender in INCREASE (“Male”, “Female” and “Other”). More diverse and inclusive choices are needed (e.g. “Transgender”, “Non-binary/Non-conforming”). The content of INCREASE might be reviewed to enhance its use in diversity and inclusivity metrics. Second, the assessment of inclusivity requires a development of a reliable and context-sensitive approach to identifying minority groups in each characteristic. Third, the optimal approach to inform clinical practice needs to be identified. In addition to concerns about comprehensibility of these candidate metrics, there may be specific clinical priorities, for example some clinicians may not want to recommend a collection that includes many narratives about poor service experiences to their service users. Lastly, cultural adaptation of these metrics needs to be considered. For example, the Military veteran characteristic may hold more cultural importance in the United States than many other countries [80]. In cultures such as Japan and South Korea, where age plays an important role [81], the Age characteristic may be more relevant. The next stages of research include refinement of each metric with attention paid to minimizing the burden of calculation and developing interpretation guidance, the involvement of key stakeholders – people living with mental health issues and mental health clinicians – in arbitrating between the candidate approaches, and real-world evaluation of the impact of more diverse and inclusive RRN collections.

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Conflicts of Interest

None declared.

Abbreviations

CRPD: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

DMHI: Digital Mental Health Intervention

INCREASE: Inventory of Characteristics of Recovery Stories

NEON: Narrative Experiences Online

SDI: Simpson's Diversity Index

SI: Simpson's Index

UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UK: United Kingdom

WEIRD: Western, Educated, Individualized, Rich and Democratic

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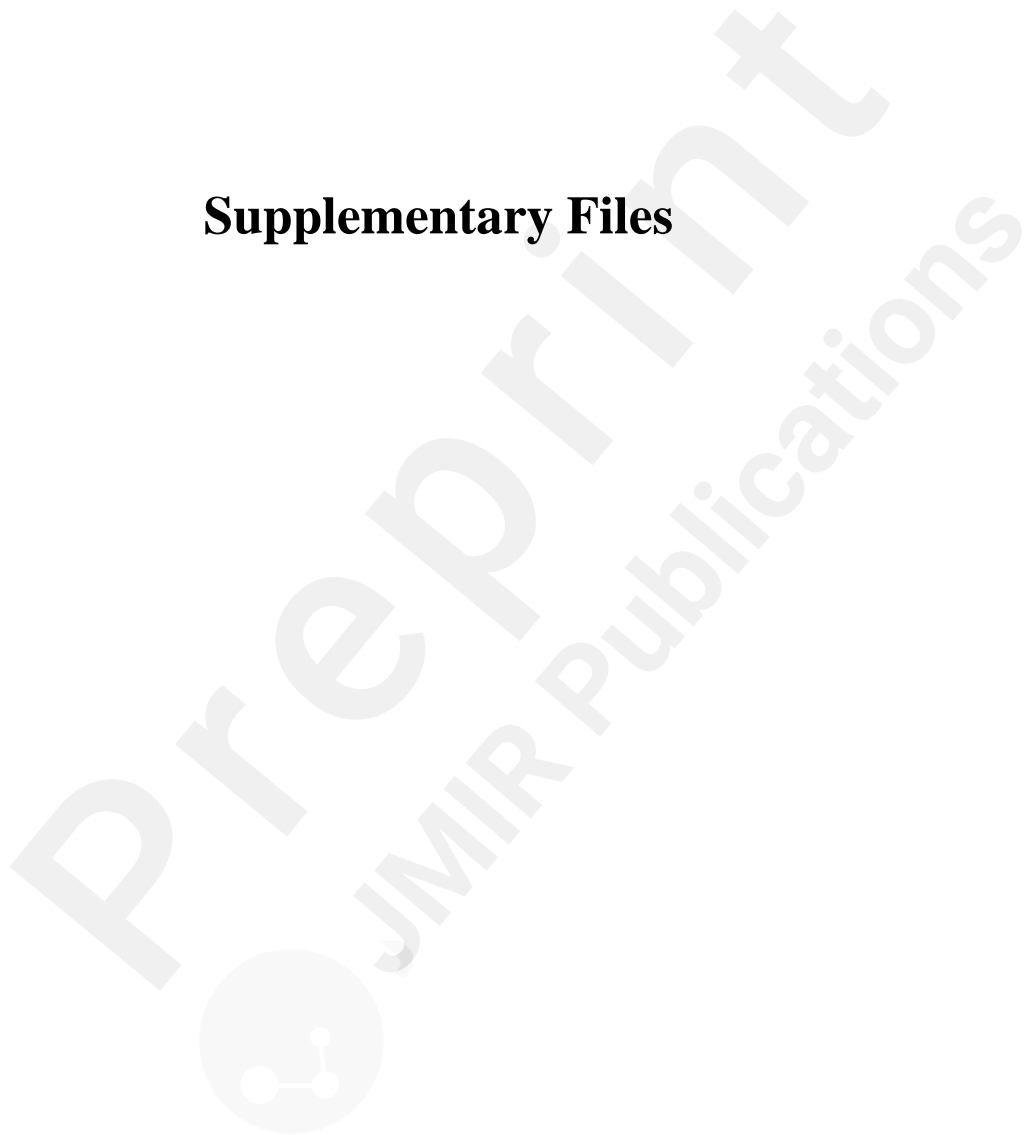
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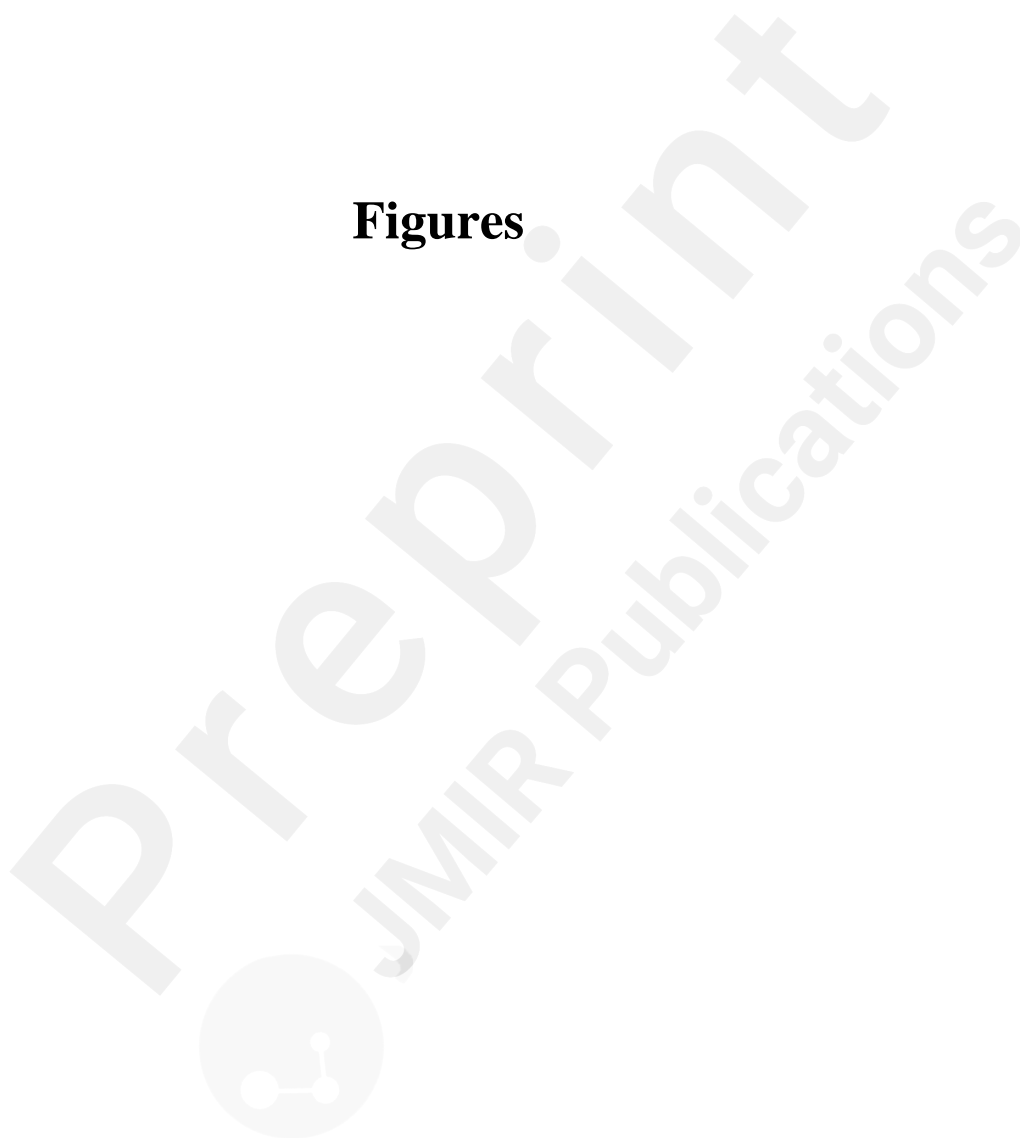
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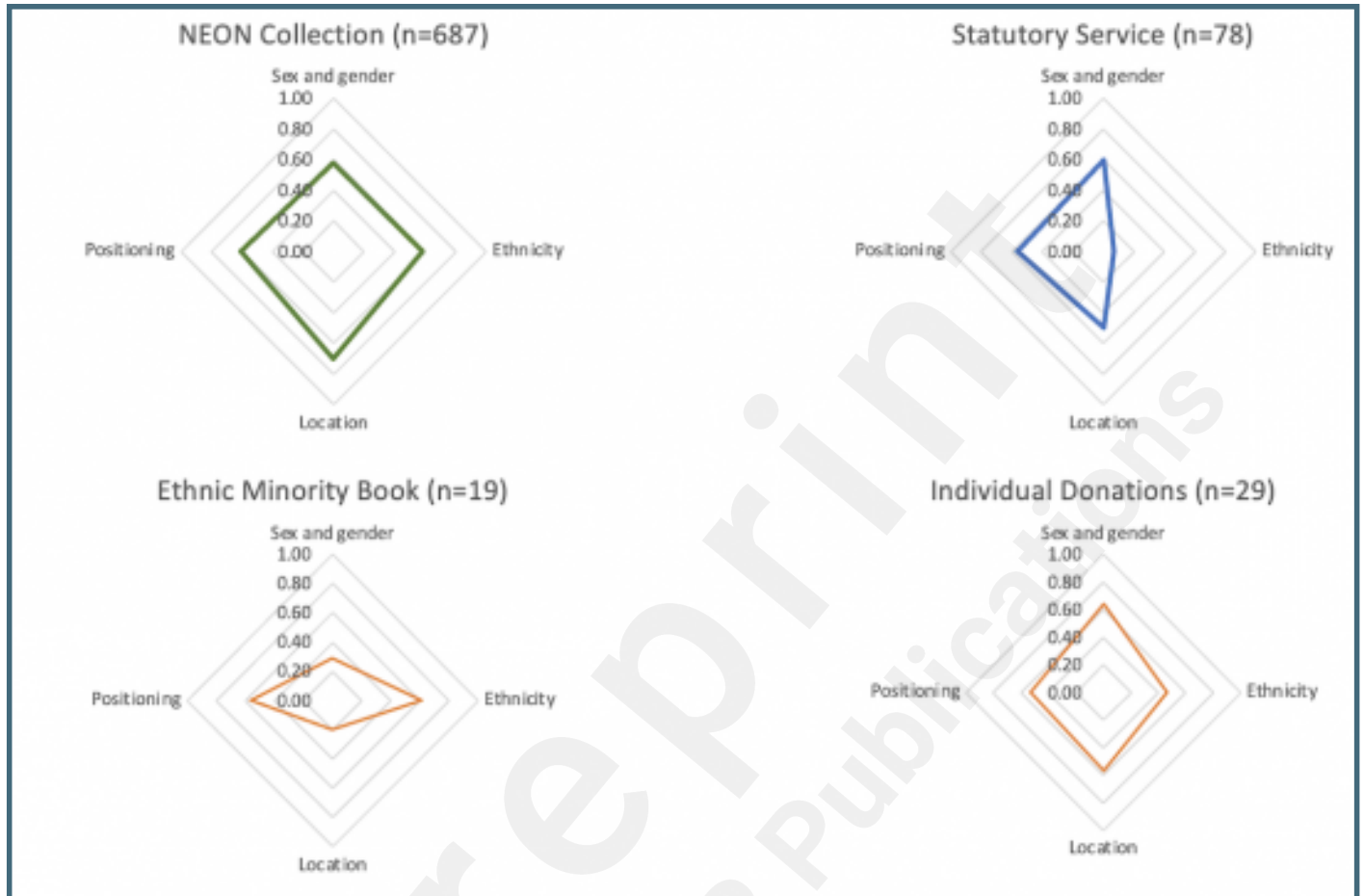
Supplementary Files



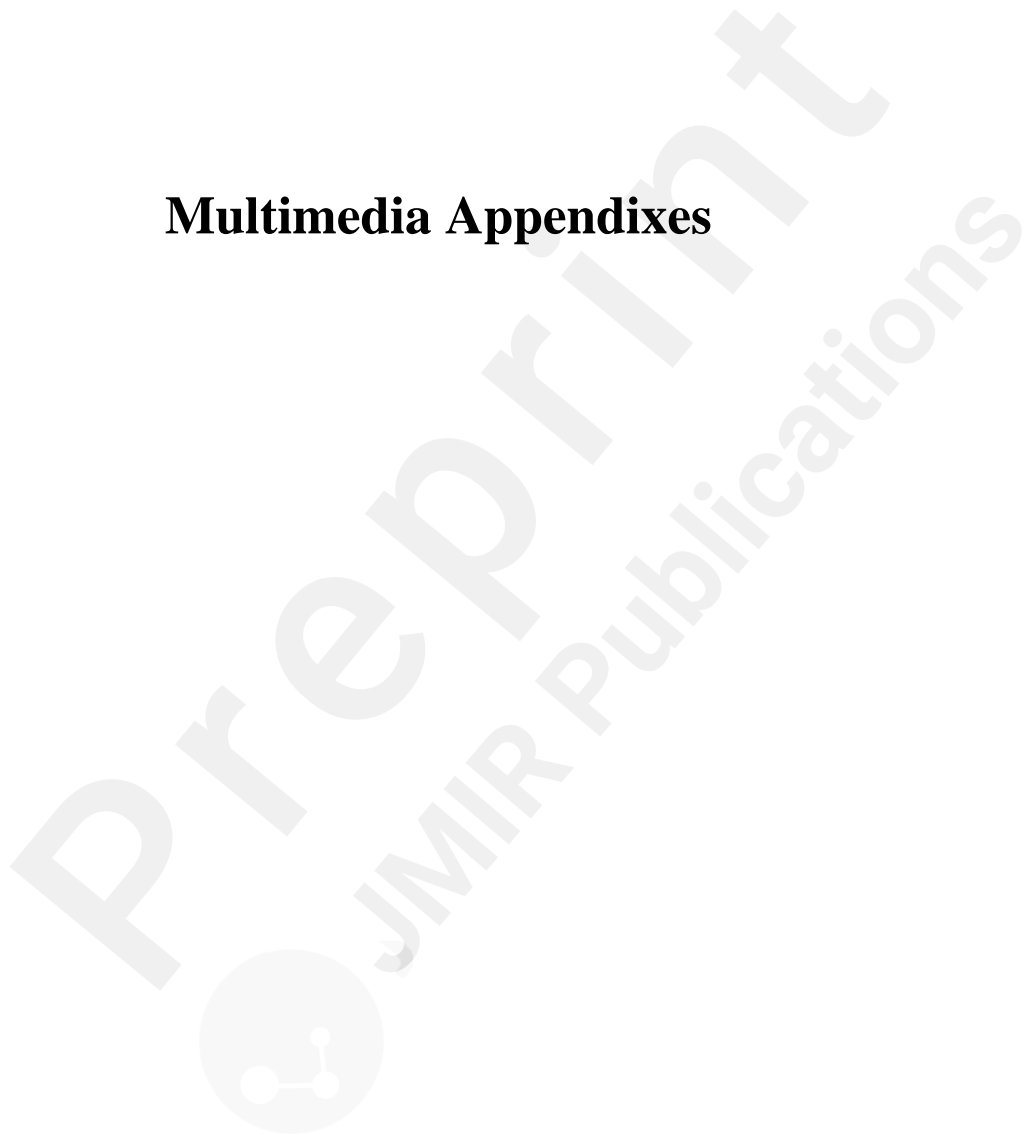
Figures



Radar charts to present the diversity scores for the Sex and gender, Origin (Ethnicity and Location) and Positioning characteristics in four collections. The radar chart presentation can visually highlight the uniqueness of each collection, and be more reader-friendly and inclusive, but cannot present many characteristics.



Multimedia Appendixes



Supplementary File 1: Income level and WEIRD/non-WEIRD status of 20 countries.

URL: <http://asset.jmir.pub/assets/042810e874213473a6a2b98eb457f9ad.docx>

Supplementary File 2: Example calculations of Simpson's Diversity Index.

URL: <http://asset.jmir.pub/assets/b545cc1aef26d65a078c39ae8c7d299a.docx>

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