

Factors and Interventions associated with Intention to Leave and Retention of Allied Health Professions - an Umbrella Review

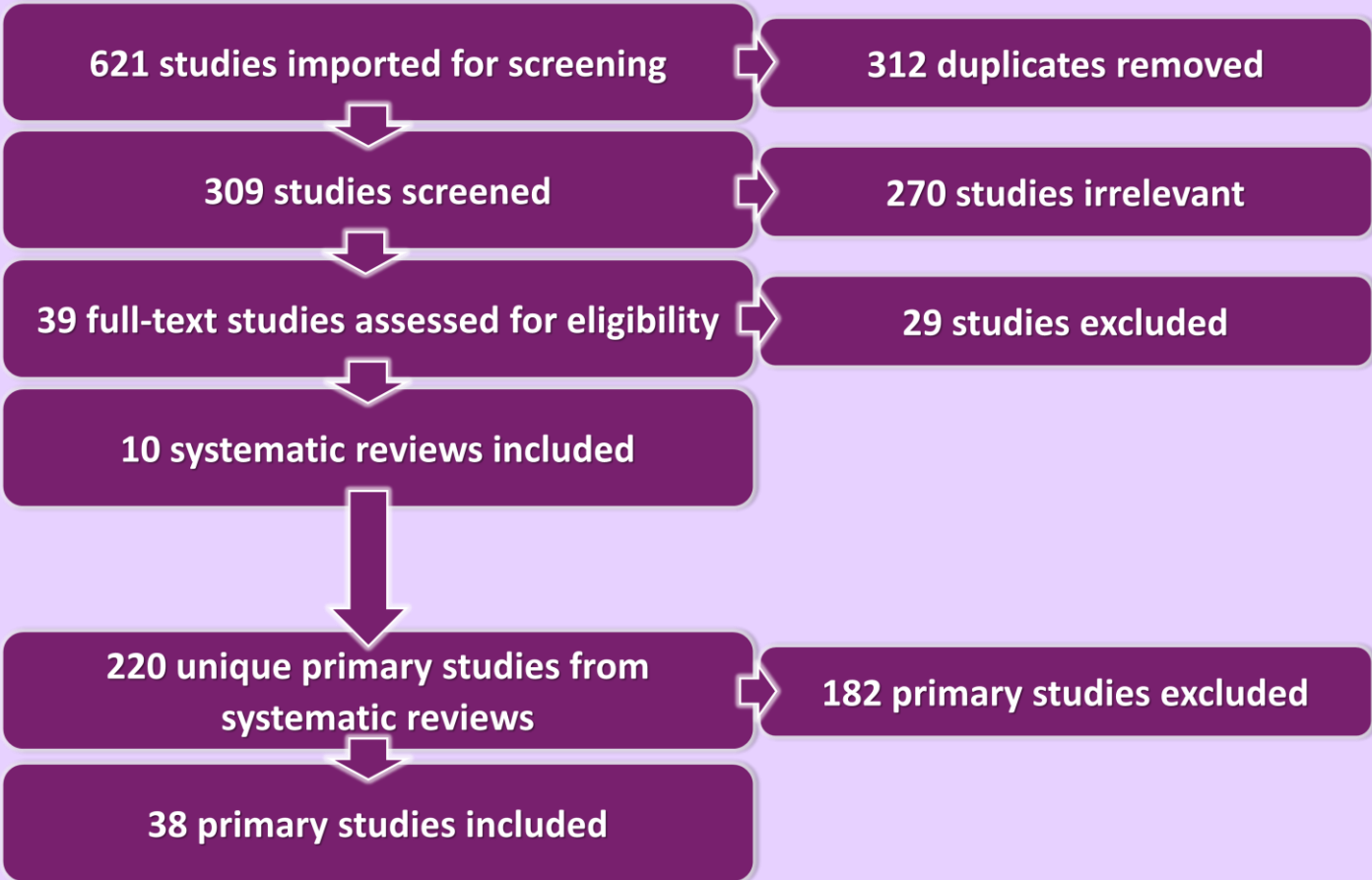
Introduction & Aims

Workforce retention among Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) has been a persistent challenge in the United Kingdom (UK) and poses a significant barrier to achieving safe staffing levels. Leaver rates only showed minimal improvement from 6.0% to 5.7% from April 2024 to March 2025.¹ Chronic understaffing and high turnover are associated with low morale, unmanageable workloads, and burnout, perpetuating a negative workforce cycle.²

A recent NHS England survey indicates that 69% of AHPs have considered leaving their role³ and yet research on factors influencing intention to leave (ITL) and workforce retention among AHPs remains limited. A 2023 rapid review⁴ identified 17 factors influencing AHP retention, however, this review included only eight of the 14 UK AHP professions. To address this gap, we conducted an umbrella review of the evidence relating to ITL and retention across all 14 UK AHP professions.

Methods

- Pre-registered with PROSPERO:
<https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/PROSPERO/view/CRD420251035030>
- Databases: MEDLINE, CINAHL Complete, Scopus
- Systematic Reviews on retention, or ITL for AHPs internationally
- Screening and data extraction using Covidence
- Due to insufficient detail, data were extracted from relevant primary studies included in the systematic reviews
- Quality Assessment based on Rigour, Richness, and Relevance
- Factors were mapped using an existing nursing ITL framework⁵



Results

- Only five studies tested interventions (figure 1)
 - Improved quality of clinical supervision and profession-led team improved retention
 - Interventions based on pay compensation, wellbeing, and rural exposure did not significantly affect retention
- Review of the 38 primary studies highlighted nine prominent themes associated with retention/ITL (figure 2)
- The analysis revealed 11 new subthemes not captured in the original framework for mapping retention factors (Figure 3)

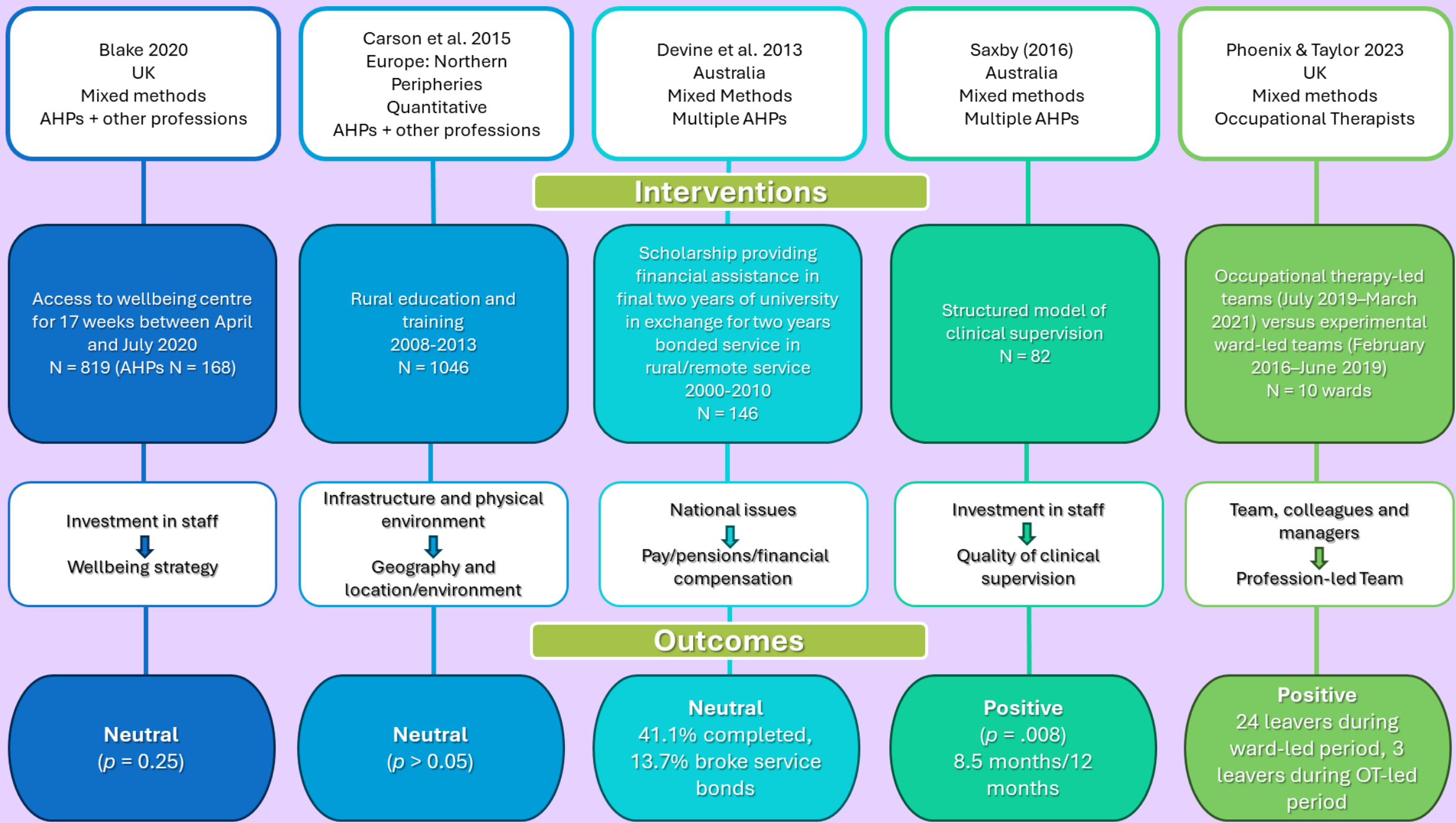


Figure 1: Intervention Studies

Figure 2: Most prominent themes

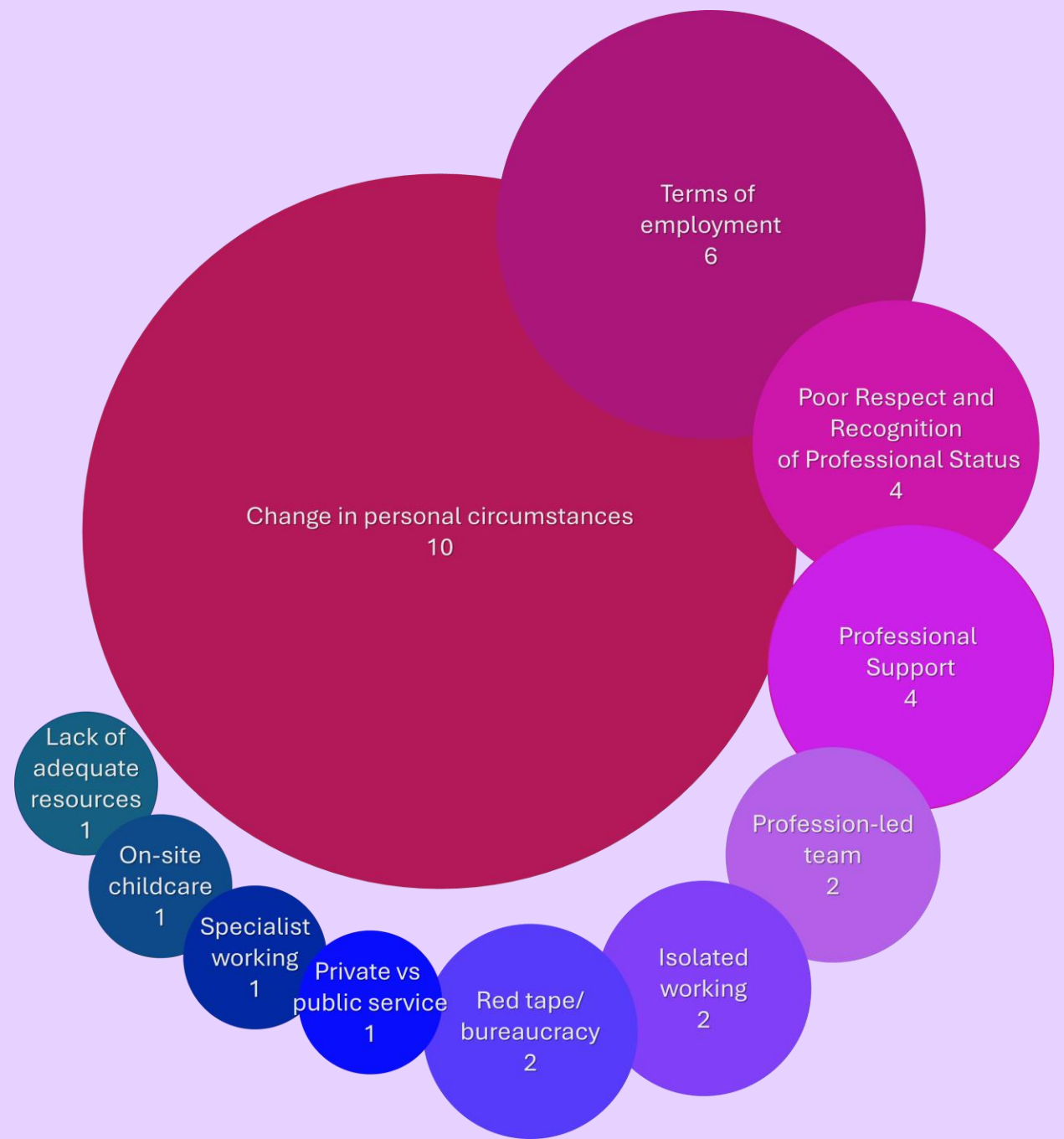
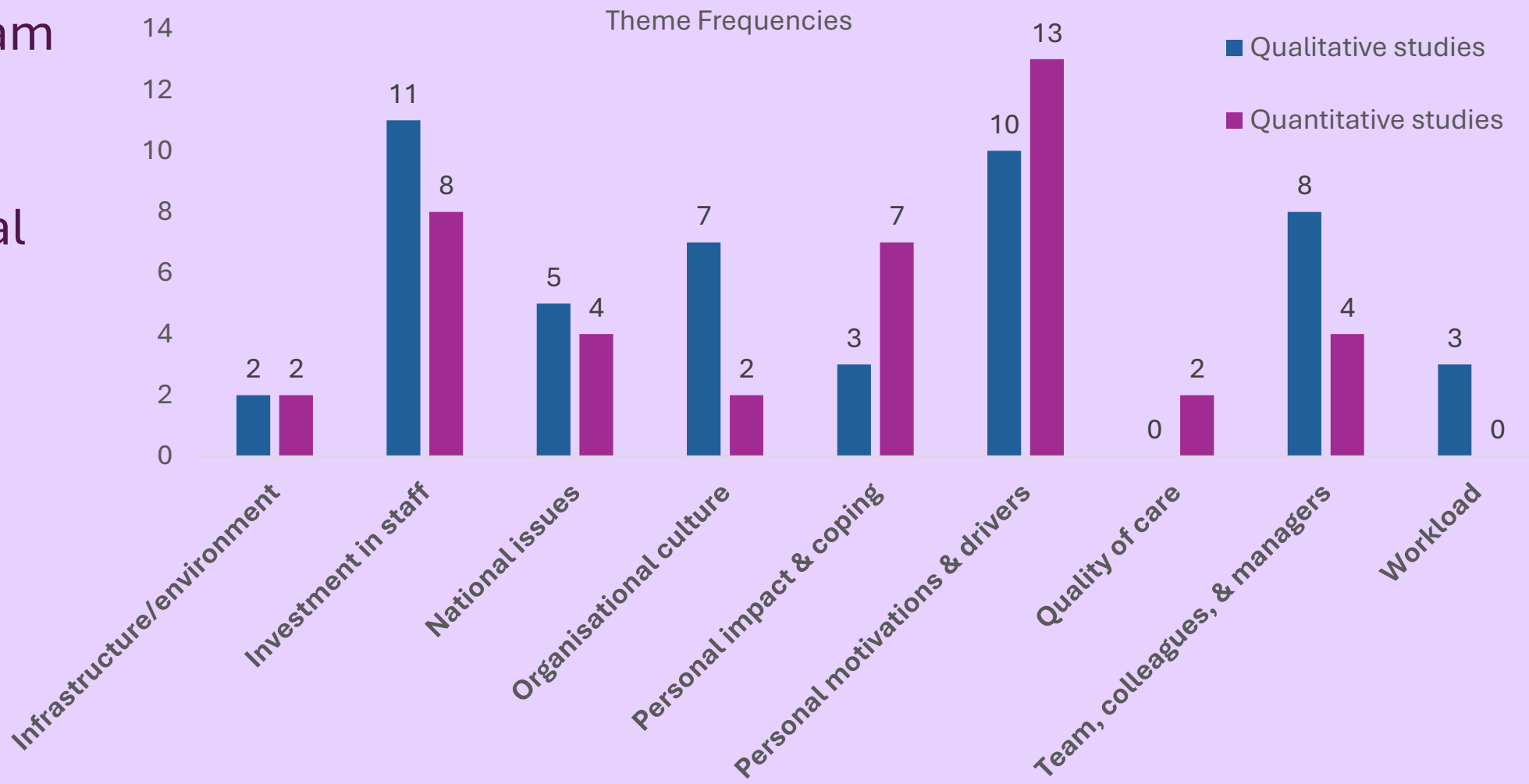


Figure 3: No. of studies highlighting new subthemes

Conclusions

- Some overlap in factors affecting retention with those in nursing
- More rigorous, multi-centre studies are needed to build upon existing exploratory work and confirm factors that affect retention in order to develop interventions that work
- Findings are limited due to diversion from traditional umbrella review methodology and large number of outdated studies

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References

