Perceptions of Who is in the Healthcare Team? A Content Analysis of Social Media Posts during COVID-19 Pandemic

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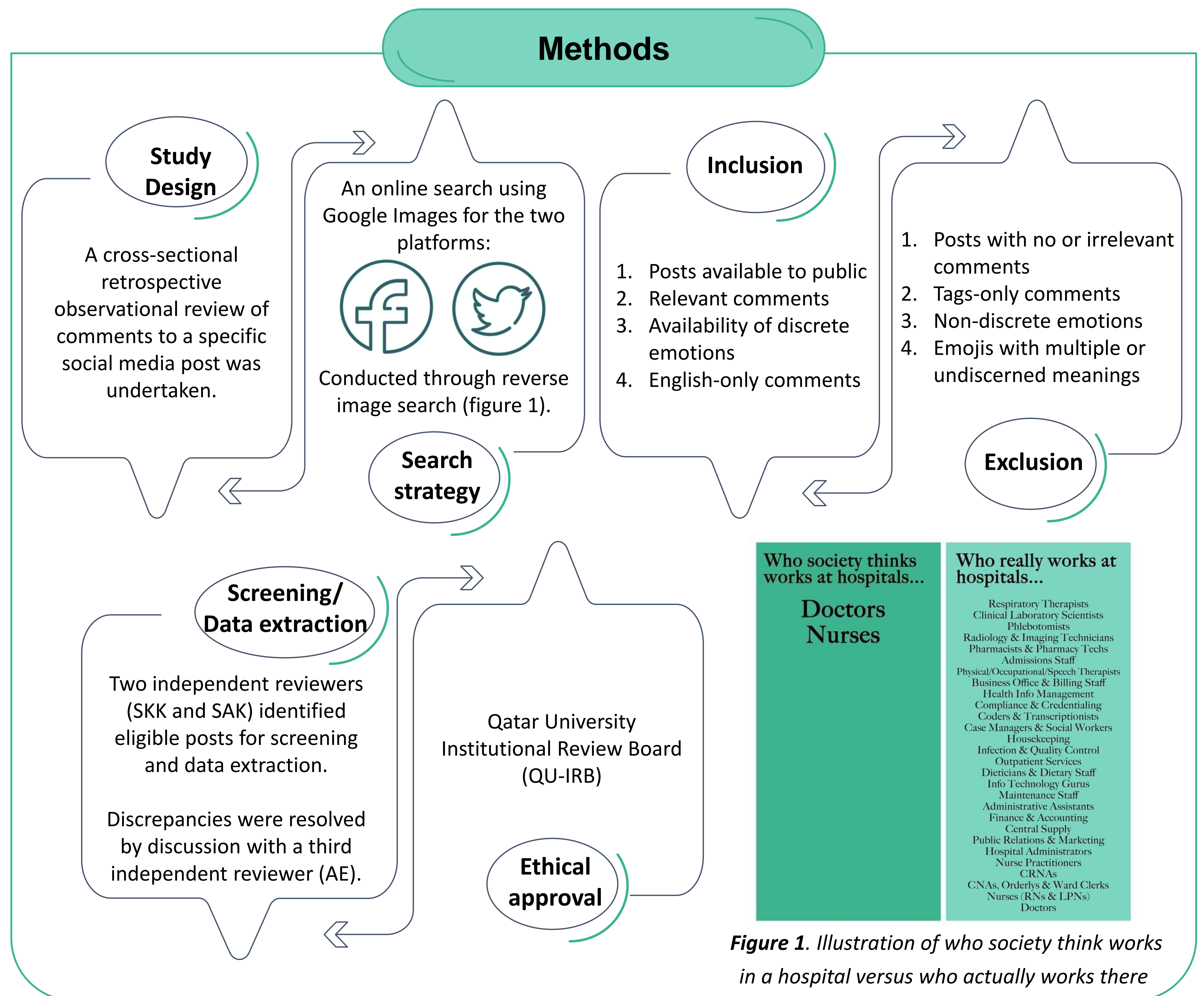
Background

- The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted that along with physicians and nurses, other professional staff have significant patient-facing roles
- Social media platforms are seen as an instant method to communicate with the public and to provide better understanding of their perception about the roles of healthcare professionals
- As literature related to public perceptions of interprofessional teams is limited, social media content analysis is a potential tool to study public perception of interprofessional teams

Aims

- The aim of this study was to use social listening technique to explore unfiltered public perceptions of the professionals involved in healthcare teams during the COVID-19 pandemic, in a naturalistic, online setting, and to elaborate on the emotional reactions in response to an online social media post
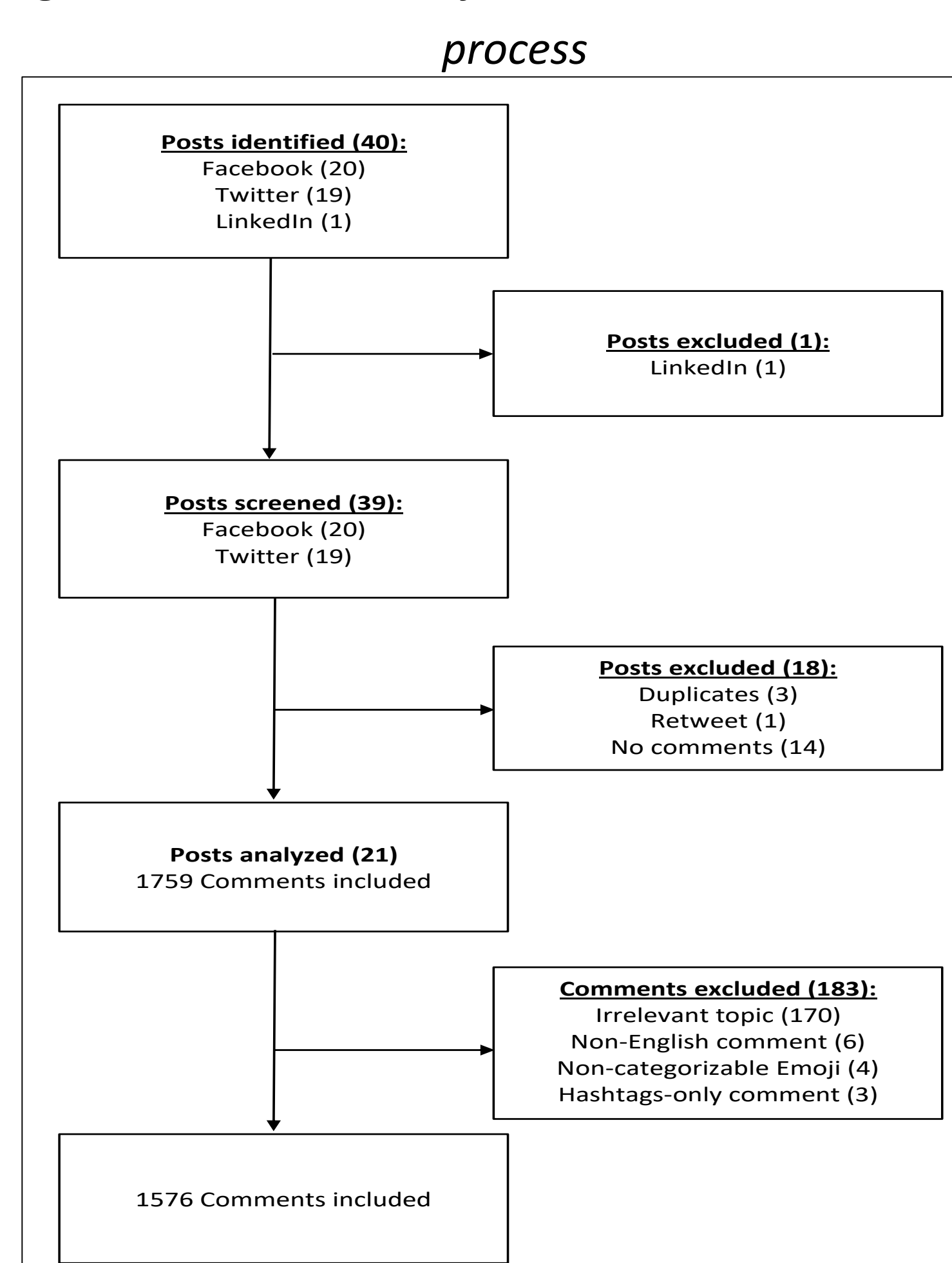
Methods

Study Design

A cross-sectional retrospective observational review of comments to a specific social media post was undertaken.

Search strategy

An online search using Google Images for the two platforms:

Conducted through reverse image search (figure 1).

Inclusion

1. Posts available to public
2. Relevant comments
3. Availability of discrete emotions
4. English-only comments

Exclusion

1. Posts with no or irrelevant comments
2. Tags-only comments
3. Non-discrete emotions
4. Emojis with multiple or undiscerned meanings

Screening/ Data extraction

Two independent reviewers (SKK and SAK) identified eligible posts for screening and data extraction.

Discrepancies were resolved by discussion with a third independent reviewer (AE).

Ethical approval

Qatar University Institutional Review Board (QU-IRB)
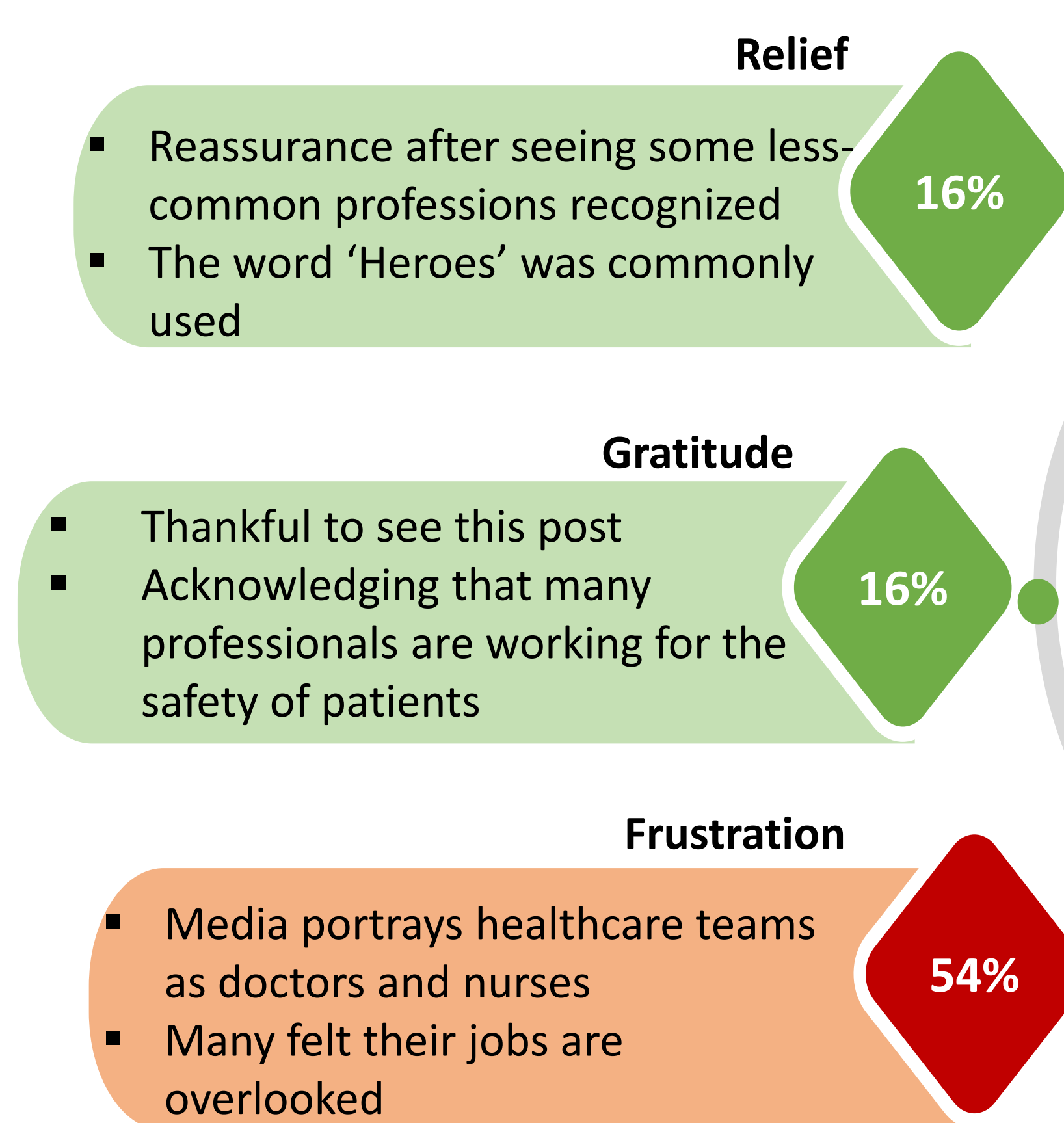

Figure 1. Illustration of who society think works in a hospital versus who actually works there

Results

Figure 2. PRISMA chart for the comments' collection process

Discrete Emotions Evoked By The Post

Relief — 16%
- Reassurance after seeing some less-common professions recognized
- The word 'Heroes' was commonly used

Gratitude — 16%
- Thankful to see this post
- Acknowledging that many professionals are working for the safety of patients

Frustration — 54%
- Media portrays healthcare teams as doctors and nurses
- Many felt their jobs are overlooked

Key Highlights Inferred From the Comments

Feeling excluded — 16%
- We are invisible
- Do not get enough credit
- No one remembers
- Always left out

Agreement — 23%
- Finally, it is said
- Well said
- Absolutely

Perception of who is in the team — 40%
- Hospitals are ran by more than just doctors and nurses
- Many health care workers are on the frontline
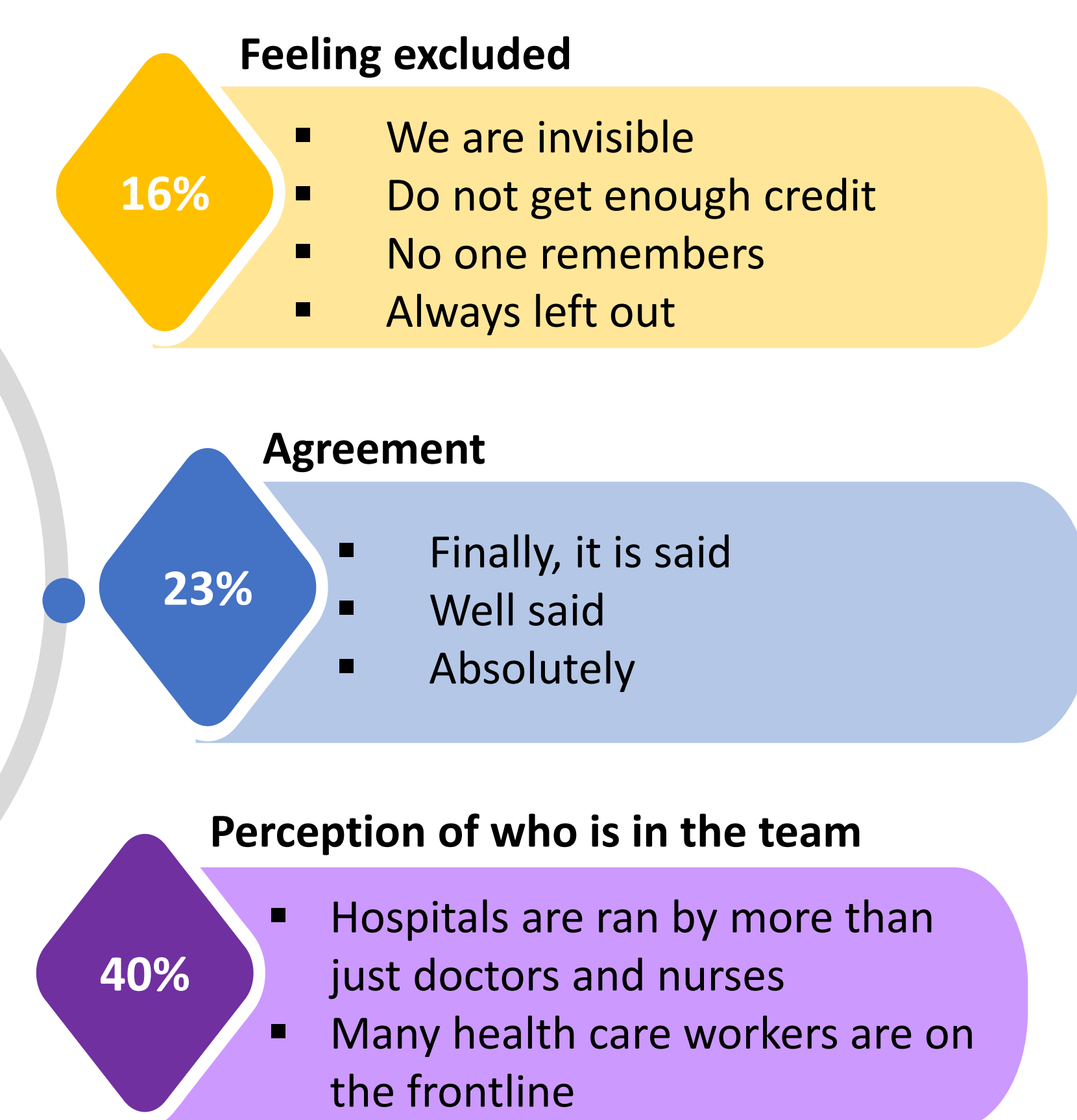
Conclusion

- The current COVID-19 pandemic and the media attention should be taken as an opportunity by the interprofessional community to work together to combat negative media stereotypes
- It is important to consider how to continue to use social media positively to raise awareness about the interprofessional team
- Further research is needed to increase understanding of public perceptions of interprofessional practice

Limitations

- A sampling frame could not be used to select the target population
- It was difficult to determine whether the sample were healthcare professionals, patients, or a member of the public
- No inferential statistics were conducted
- These posts may not be entirely representative of the emotions of the wider population as it relied only on publicly available data

Reference

This study has recently been published:
El-Awaisi A, O'Carroll V, Koraysh S, Koummich S, Huber M. Perceptions of who is in the healthcare team? A content analysis of social media posts during COVID-19 pandemic. Journal of Interprofessional Care. 2020;23:1-1.
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