

Depression literacy and perception in the Middle East and North Africa: a Scoping review

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Background and objective

- Depression is one of the most common mental health disorders globally¹ and in several countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).^{2,3,4,5}
- Low depression literacy is a strong barrier to the diagnosis and treatment of depression.^{6,7}
- Despite increasing implementation of depression literacy interventions in the MENA countries,^{8,9} there is no evaluation of the current available data on depression literacy and perception.
- To systematically map the available studies and measurements used to assess depression literacy and perception in the MENA region.

Method

- **Study design:** A scoping review.
- **Unit of analysis:** Primary studies.
- **Data source:** PubMed, PsycINFO, Google Scholar, and the reference list of included studies and relevant reviews.
- **Period of literature search:** Up to January 8, 2025.
- **Population:** Any population living in one of the 22 MENA countries (WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region) except migrants, veterans, and refugees.
- **Outcome:** Depression knowledge, stigma/attitude, help-seeking, and perception.
- **Setting:** Any.
- **Data analyses:** Descriptive analyses by country, study tool, outcome measure, data collection time, study population.

Results

Figure 1. Number of studies with depression literacy and perception measurements available in the MENA countries (n=91).

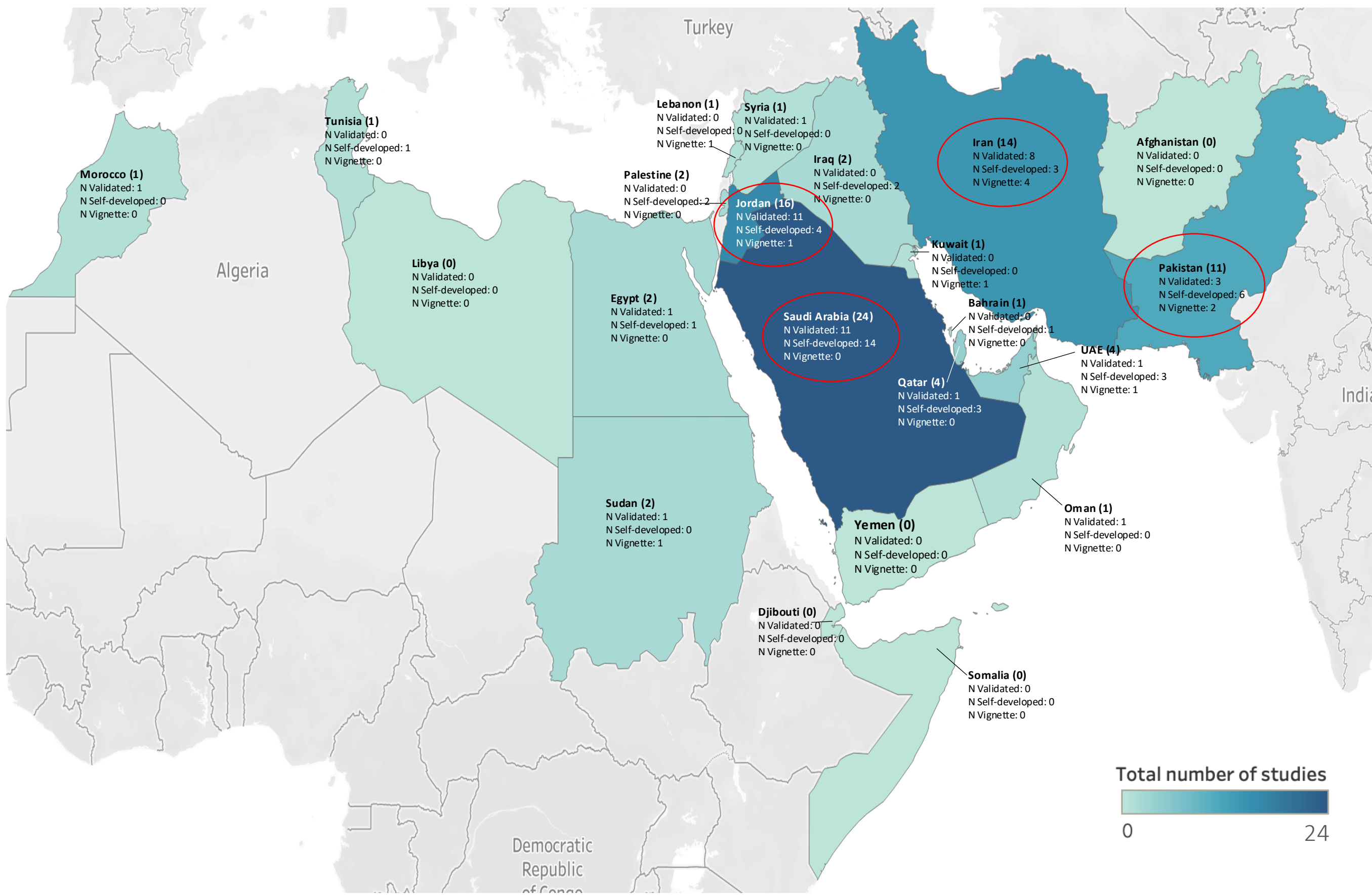


Figure 2. Number of studies reporting depression literacy and perception outcomes according to the type of tool (129 measures).

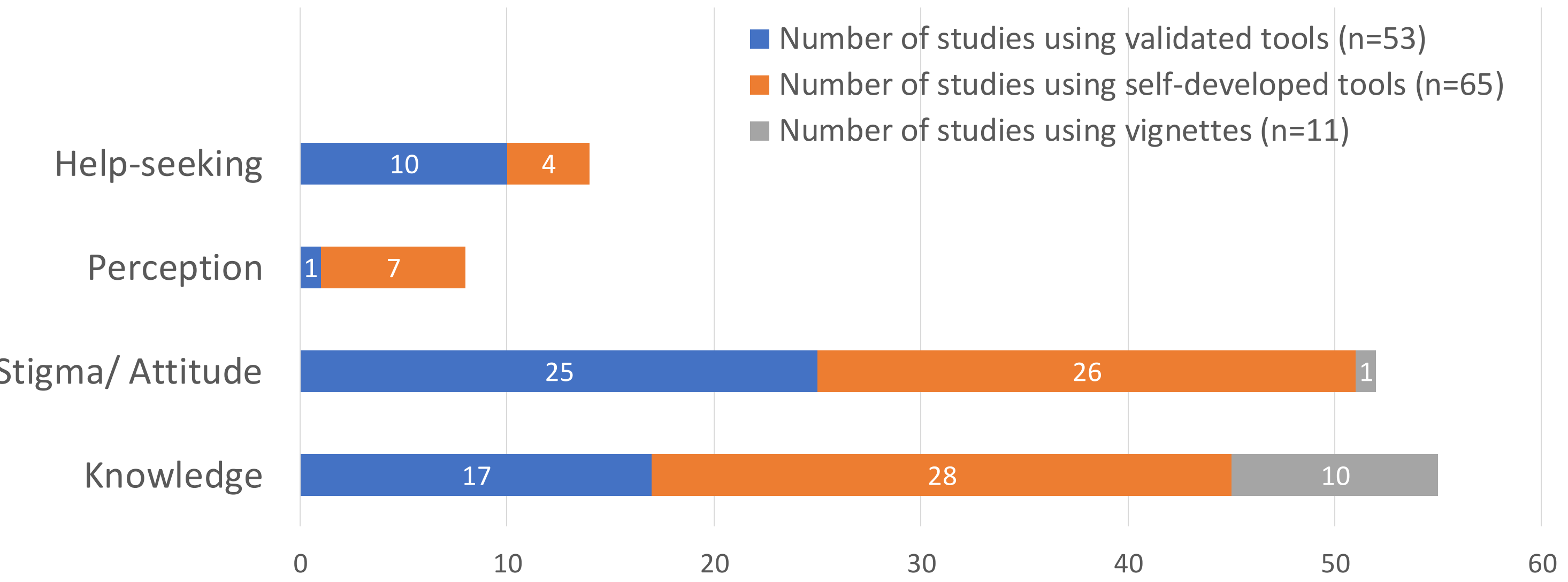


Figure 3. Used validated tools and specific concepts investigated in the included studies assessing depression literacy and perception outcomes (n=54).

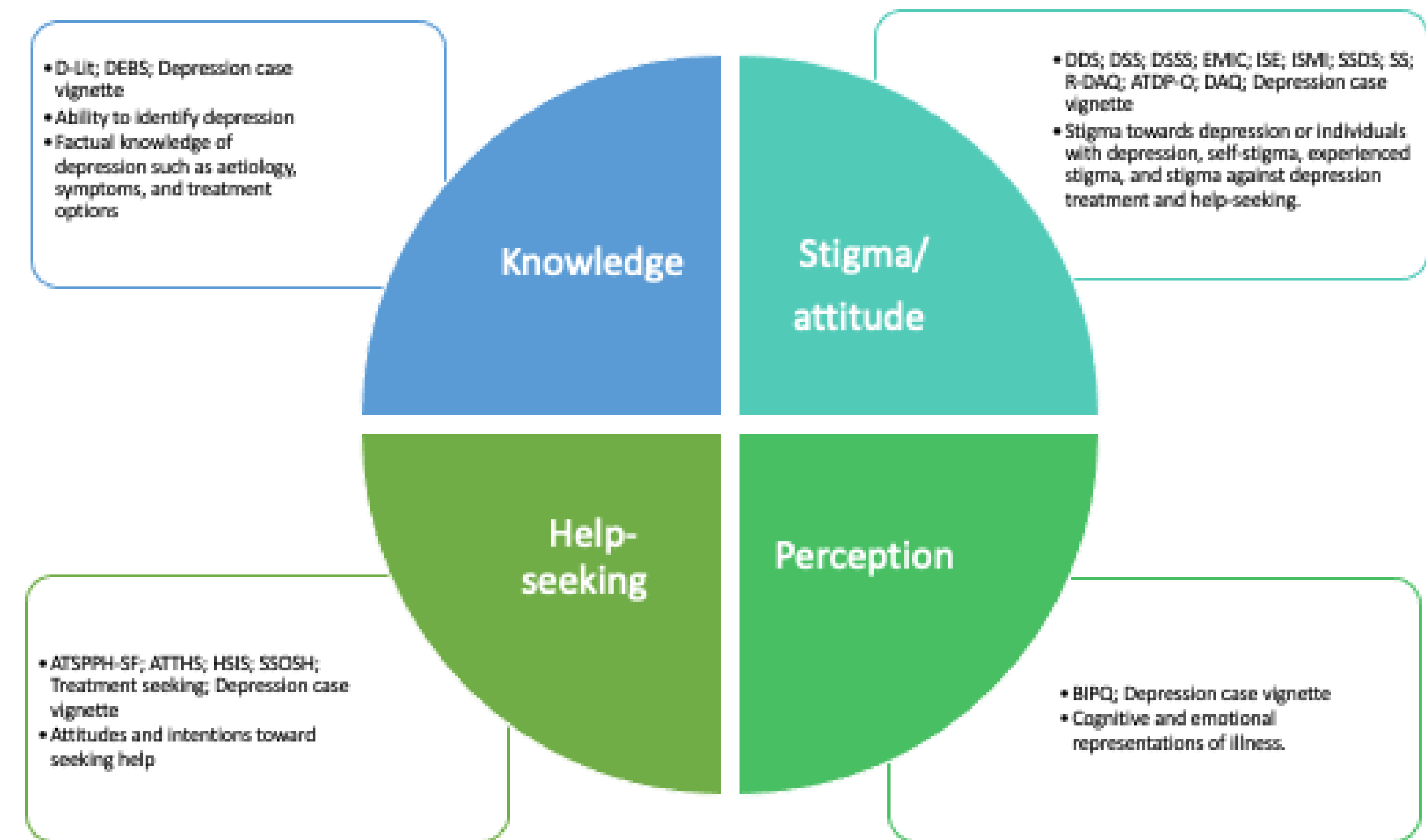


Figure 4. Number of studies according to the data collection time in studies assessing depression literacy and perception outcomes using validated and vignette tools (n=54).

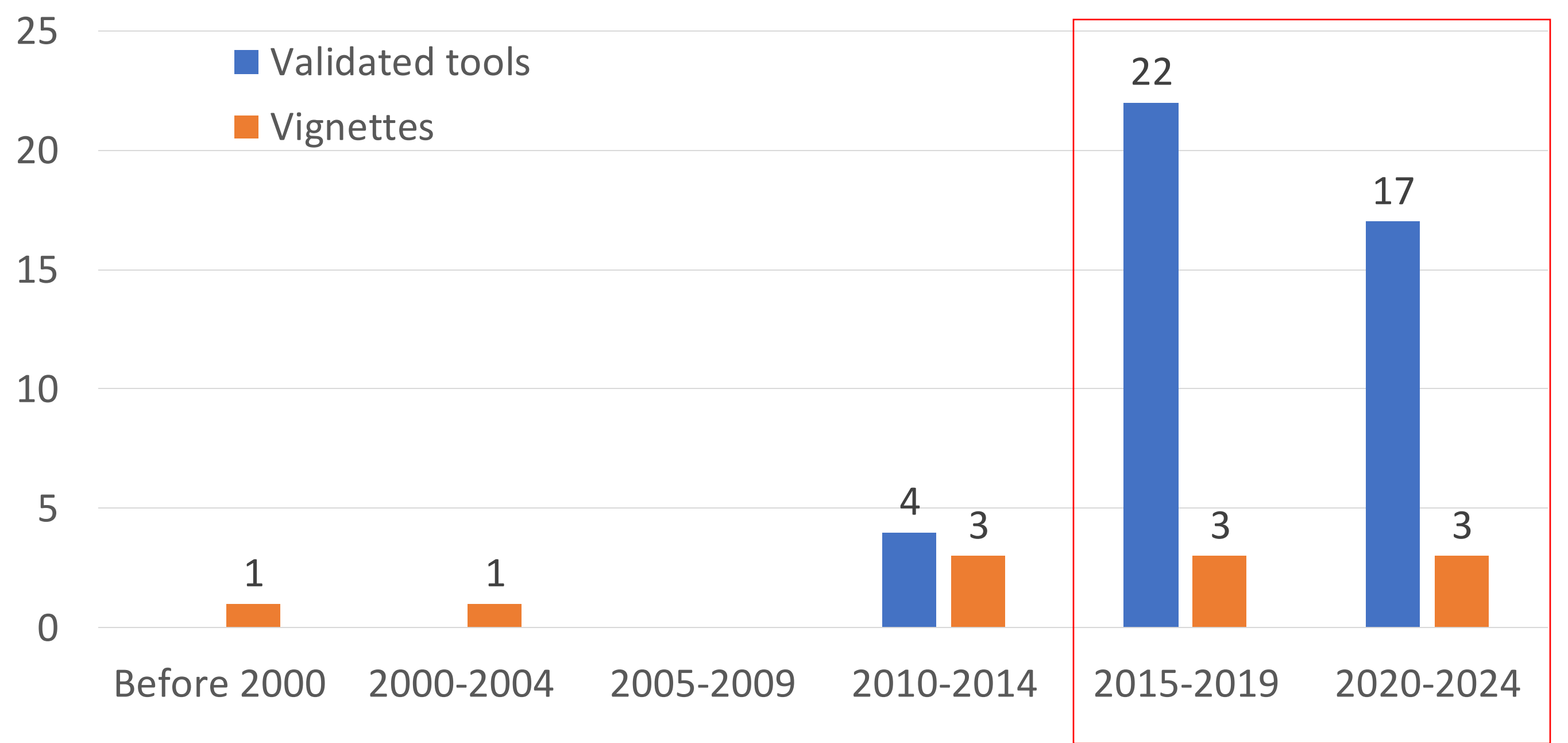
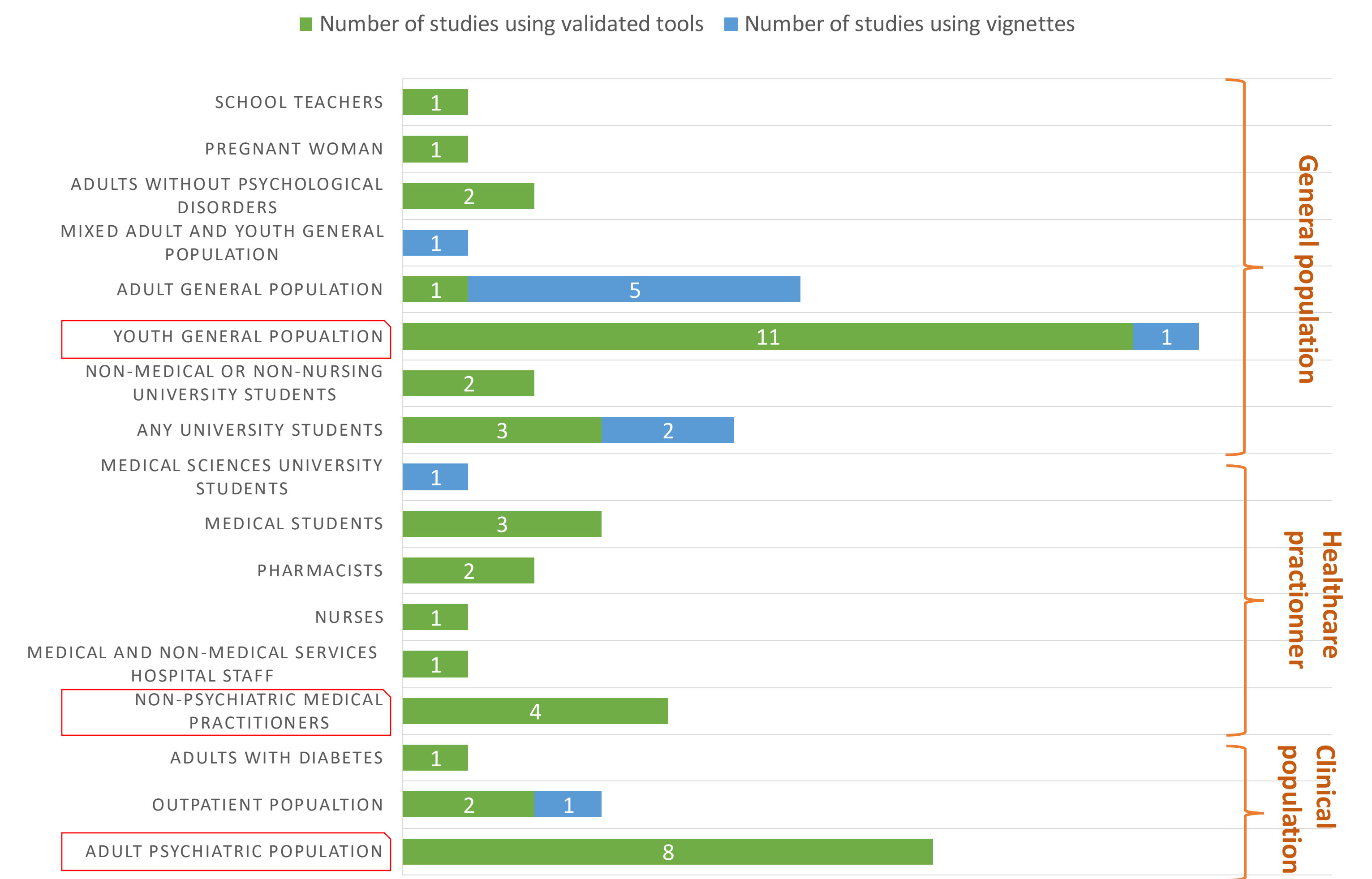


Figure 5. Number of studies according to the type of population in studies assessing depression literacy and perception outcomes using validated and vignette tools (n=54).



Conclusion

- Our scoping review highlights the sparse data available on the help-seeking and perception components of depression literacy.
- Despite the increased interest in depression literacy assessment in the recent decade, most of the available depression literacy assessments are measured using self-developed tools.
- Our findings provide a foundation for developing culturally appropriate assessment of depression literacy components and interventions.

Conflict of interest: Authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose

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