Aim:
This thematic review examines the variables that predispose individuals to significant psychological maladjustment post burn injury and propose a model of care designed to ameliorate the sequelae of burn injury and promote a functional reintegration into society.

Methods:
The search keywords in primary research: burn injury, psychological, psychosocial, rehabilitation, premorbid psychopathology, adjustment, reintegration, body image, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, coping. Databases: MEDLINE, Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health (CINAHL), and the Psychological Abstracts (PsycINFO).

Findings:
Pre-burn personality and coping strategies can significantly influence long term psychological adjustment1,2. Size and severity of the burn and gender has not been definitively related to post-burn psychological adjustment1,3.

Conclusion:
The heterogeneity and comorbid conditions are key characteristics of this patient group, and that this diversity offers unique challenges for the rehabilitation professional3. Recognising these challenges is the first step to offering appropriate interventions and treatment for this unique patient group.

A new model of intervention is proposed.

Identification of risk factors
- Premorbid psychopathology
- Affective mood disorder
- Alcohol / drug dependence
- Unemployment
- Female gender

Immediate inpatient psychiatric intervention

Follow routine intervention protocol

Provision of appropriate interventions

Ongoing routine outpatient psychological assessment, support, counselling. If onset of depression, anxiety, PTSD...

Pre-assessment routine psychological screening

References: