

The Breast Cancer Survivorship Program: Systematic Review of Literature with Recommendations for a Successful Implementation

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BACKGROUND

The National Accreditation Program of Breast Centers (NAPBC) has advocated that a comprehensive survivorship care plan is an essential element to successful patient care. The 2018 NAPBC standards recently added that all eligible patients within six months of completing active treatment must have a survivorship care plan (SCP) developed and implemented following the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) guidelines. While there have been minimum requirements and suggestions for implementation, there is lack of specific and comprehensive recommendations. We sought to create a definitive and tangible pathway for programs to follow to meet survivorship guidelines.

METHODS

A systematic literature review was conducted of peer-reviewed articles in PubMed, using a combination of keywords “breast,” “cancer,” “neoplasm,” survivorship,” “care,” and “plan.” Using the PRISMA guidelines, articles were screened for relevance to breast cancer survivorship care planning and further categorized based on their recommendations within the SCP.

RESULTS

A total of 2553 studies initially were reviewed from the years 1950-2019. A total of 170 studies met the inclusion criteria. The most prevalent categories within an SCP that were reported on were: who should deliver the SCP, when follow up surveillance should be conducted, healthy lifestyle focus, mental health focus, treatment side effect management and ethnic disparities.

Table 1. PRISMA guidelines flowchart

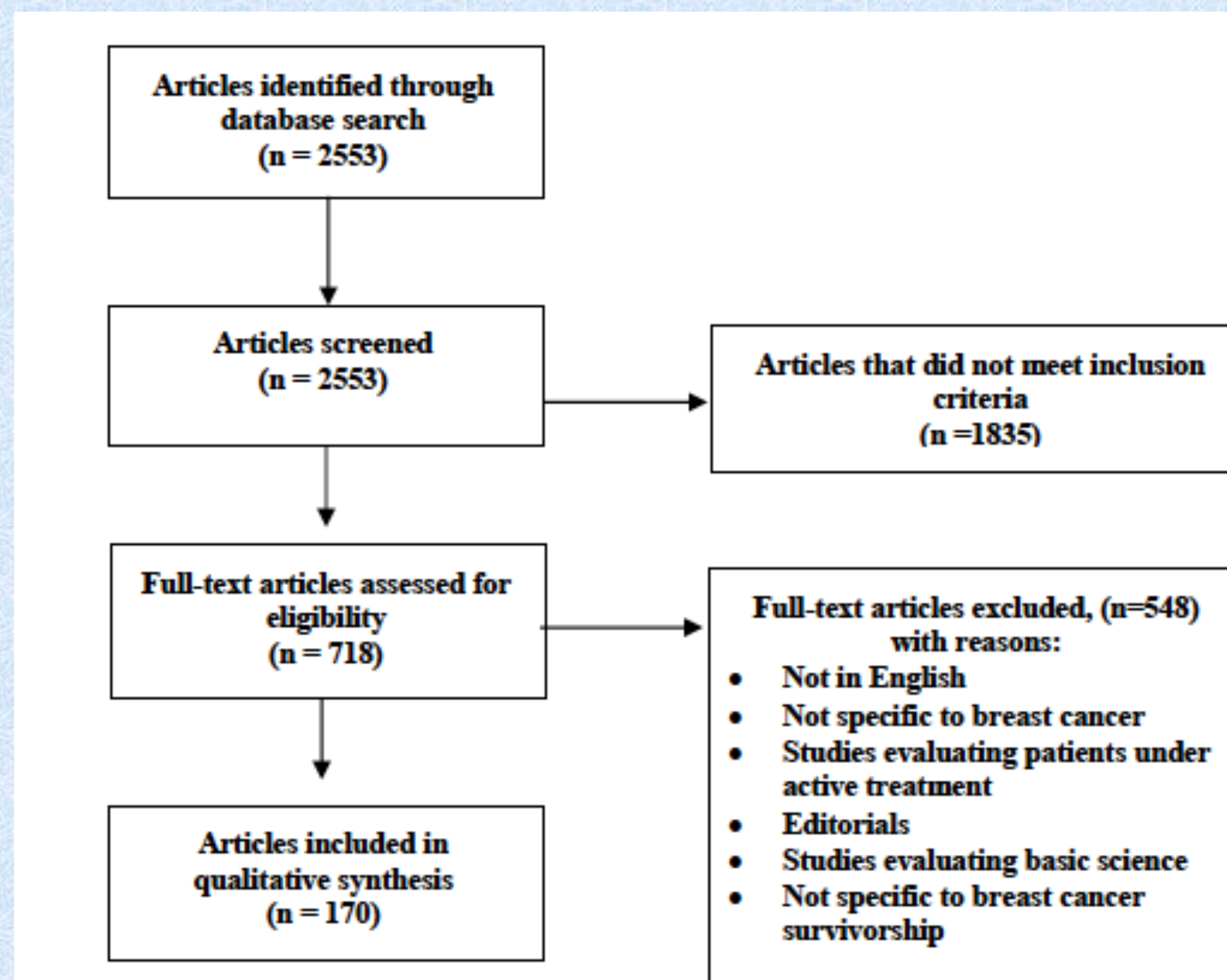
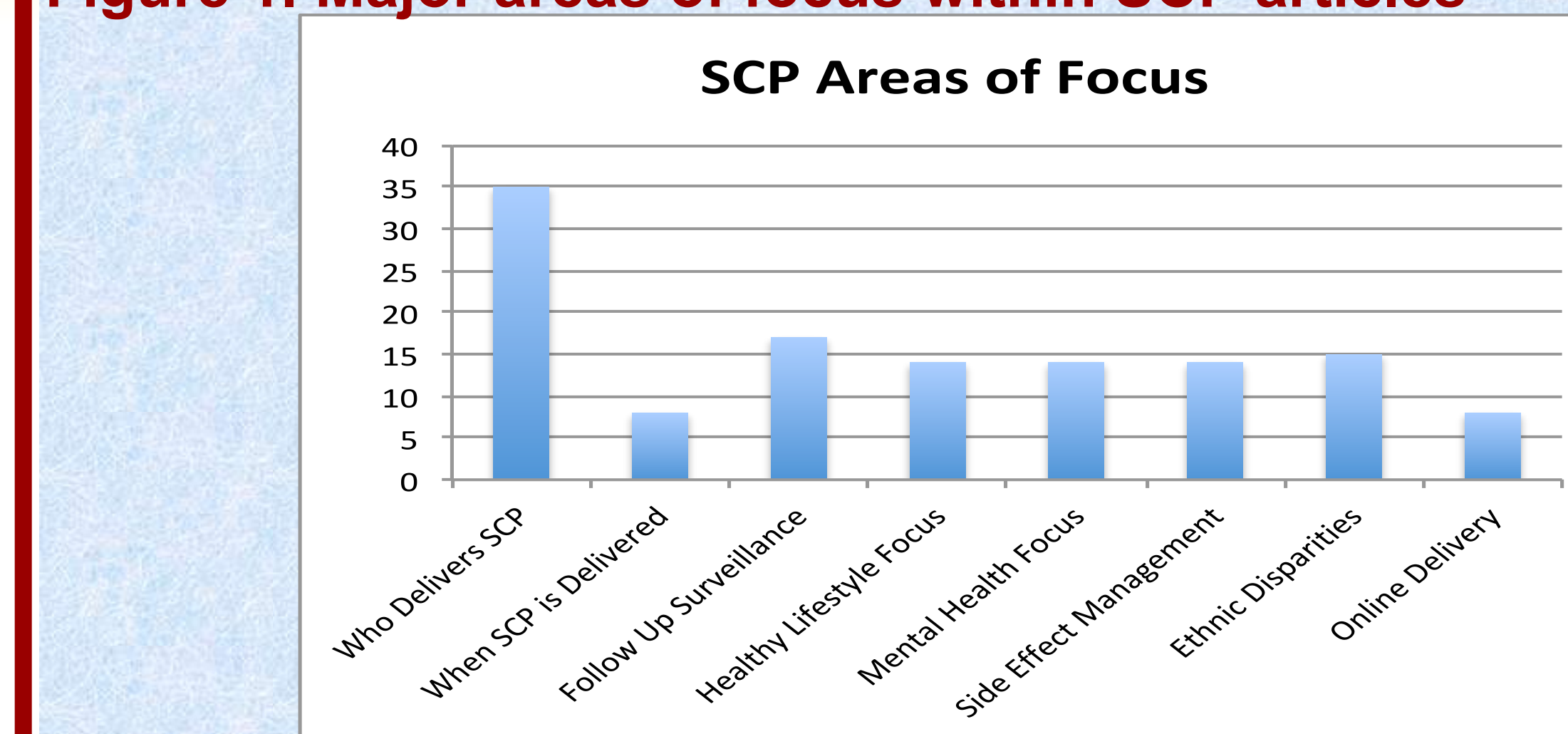


Figure 1. Major areas of focus within SCP articles



CONCLUSIONS

We concluded that a successful, comprehensive SCP should adhere to the following components: the ideal time for delivery of a survivorship care plan should be at 3-12 months post-surgery depending on adjuvant therapy and HER2 status; care plans prepared by oncology nurses and delivered by the oncology nurse practitioners; specific guidance on maintaining healthy lifestyle habits and managing distress, and close surveillance and management of treatment side effects.