

SUPPORT AT EVERY STEP: SPINE SURGERY PATIENT NAVIGATORS ENHANCE QUALITY OF CARE

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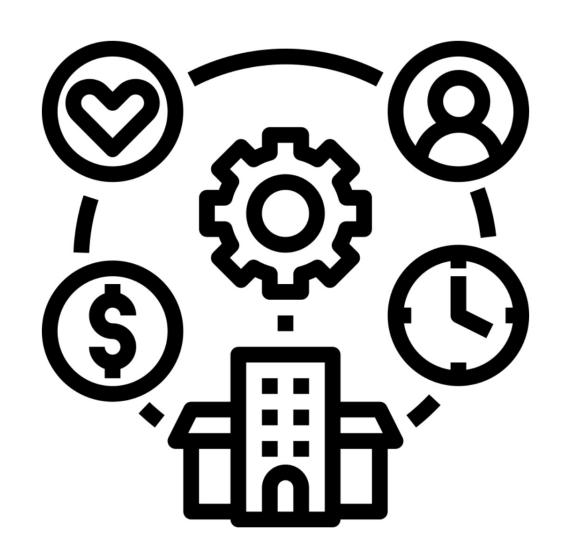
BACKGROUND

- Spine surgery and the recovery process is both physically and mentally taxing for patients.¹⁻²
- Sociodemographic disparities exist in access to spine surgery and postoperative outcomes, with patients who are low-income, older, and/or non-White generally experiencing worse outcomes.³⁻⁶
- Patient navigator programs have demonstrated value in improving patient quality of life and reducing patient distress in other disease processes.⁷⁻⁹
- **In order to address these disparities in care and better support patients undergoing spine surgery at Duke, we developed an innovative Spine Surgery Patient Navigators program.**

PROGRAM GOALS

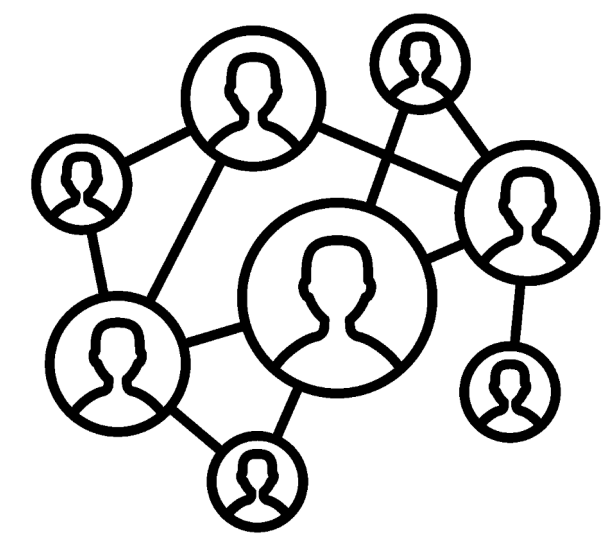
Aim 1: Enhance Healthcare Access and Resource Utilization

Patient navigators serve as liaisons between the provider and patient, addressing any questions and connecting patients to relevant resources.



Aim 2: Expand Patients' Social Support Networks

Patient navigators spend time connecting with patients in the hospital and continue to check-in on their overall wellbeing via post-operative phone calls.

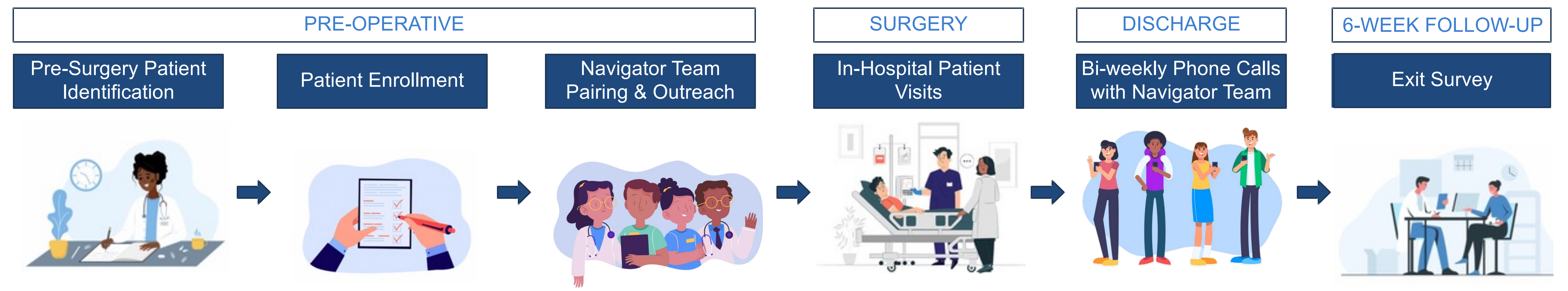


Aim 3: Improve Postoperative Mobility and Physical Status

Patient navigators demonstrate mobility exercises, explain their importance, and confirm patient progress with the physical therapy team.

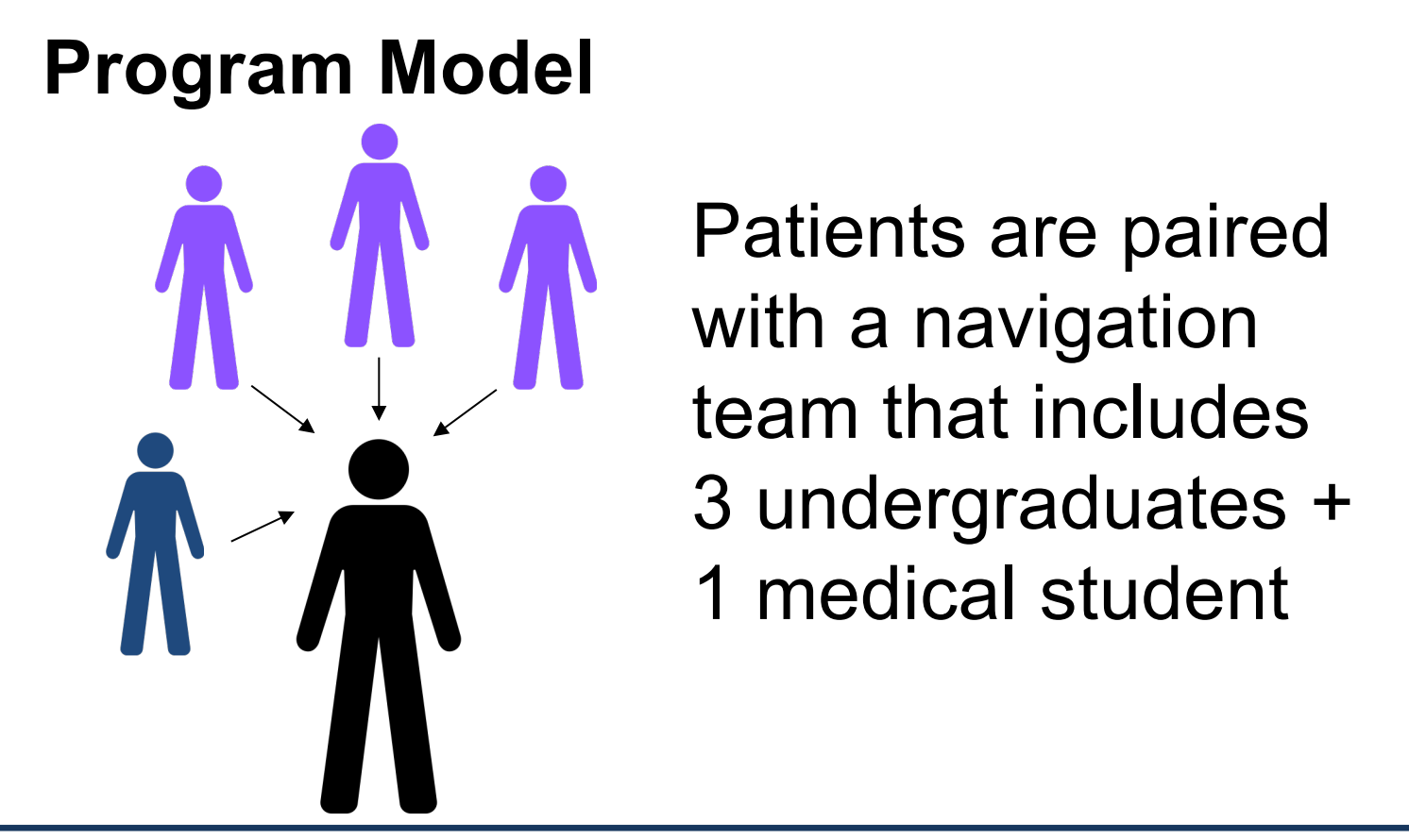
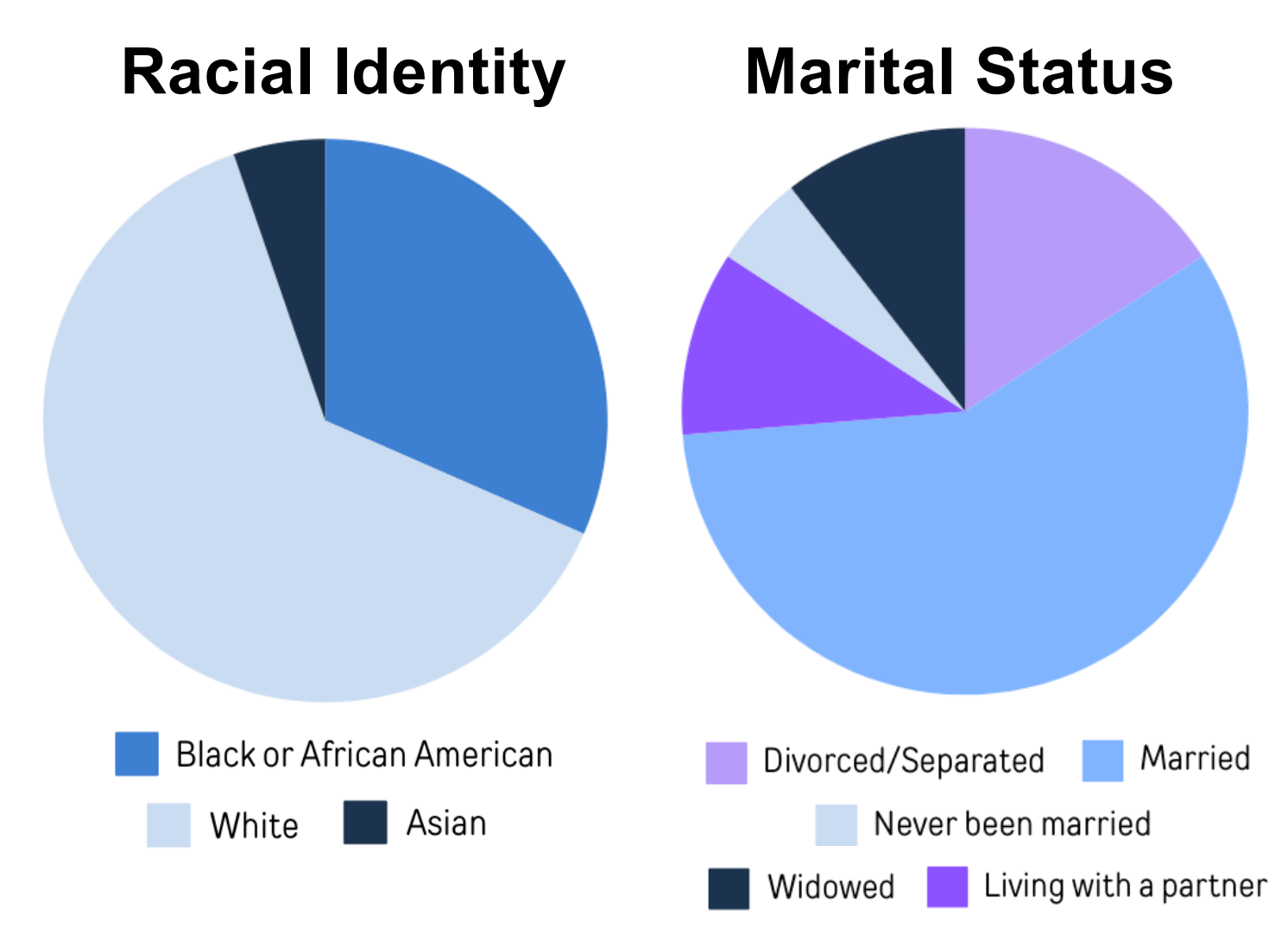


PROGRAM INTERVENTION

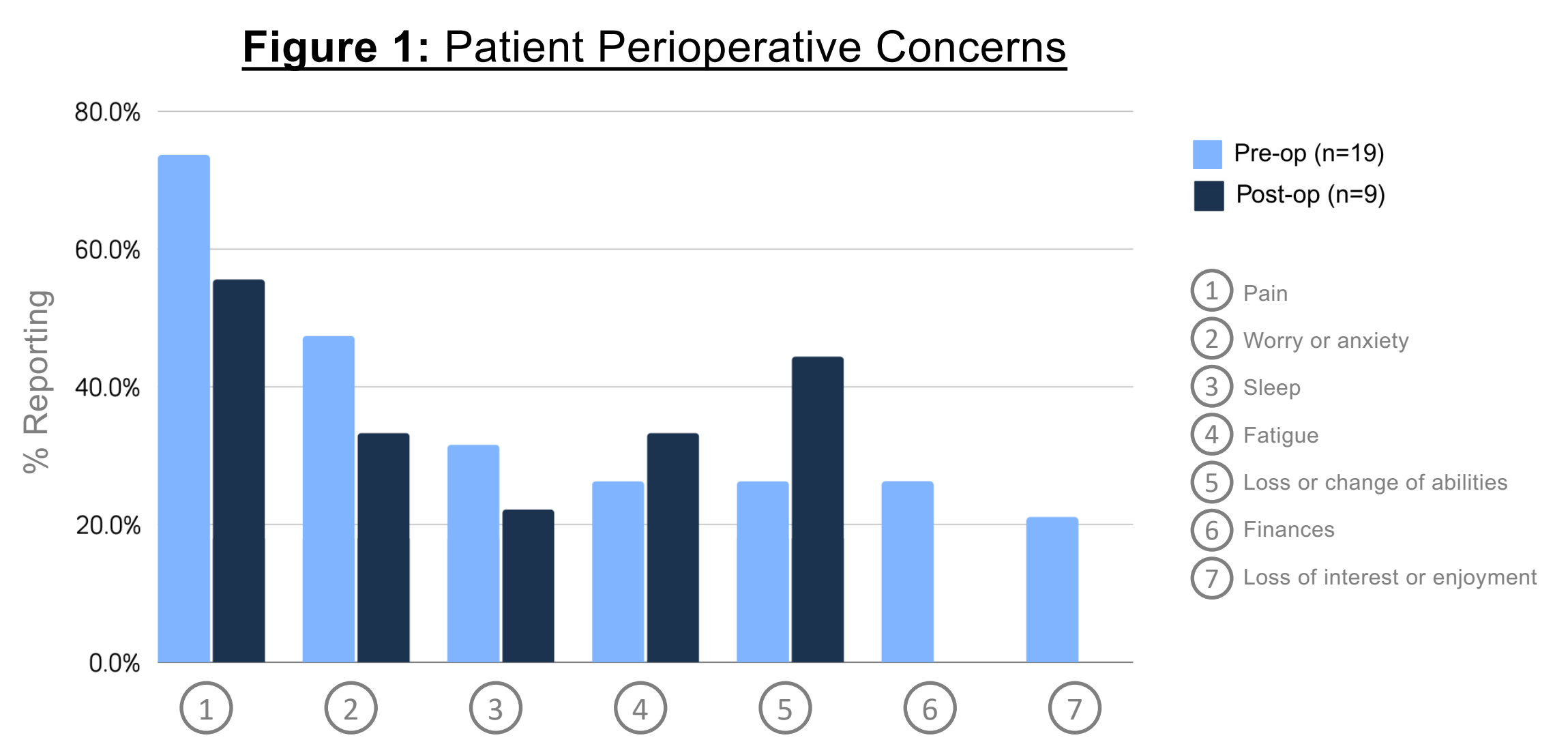


PARTICIPANTS

- 19** Patients Enrolled
- Mean age was 65 years \pm 5.9
 - Nearly two thirds (63.2%, 12/19) identified as male and 63.2% identified as White
 - Most patients were married (57.9%, 11/19)



PRELIMINARY RESULTS

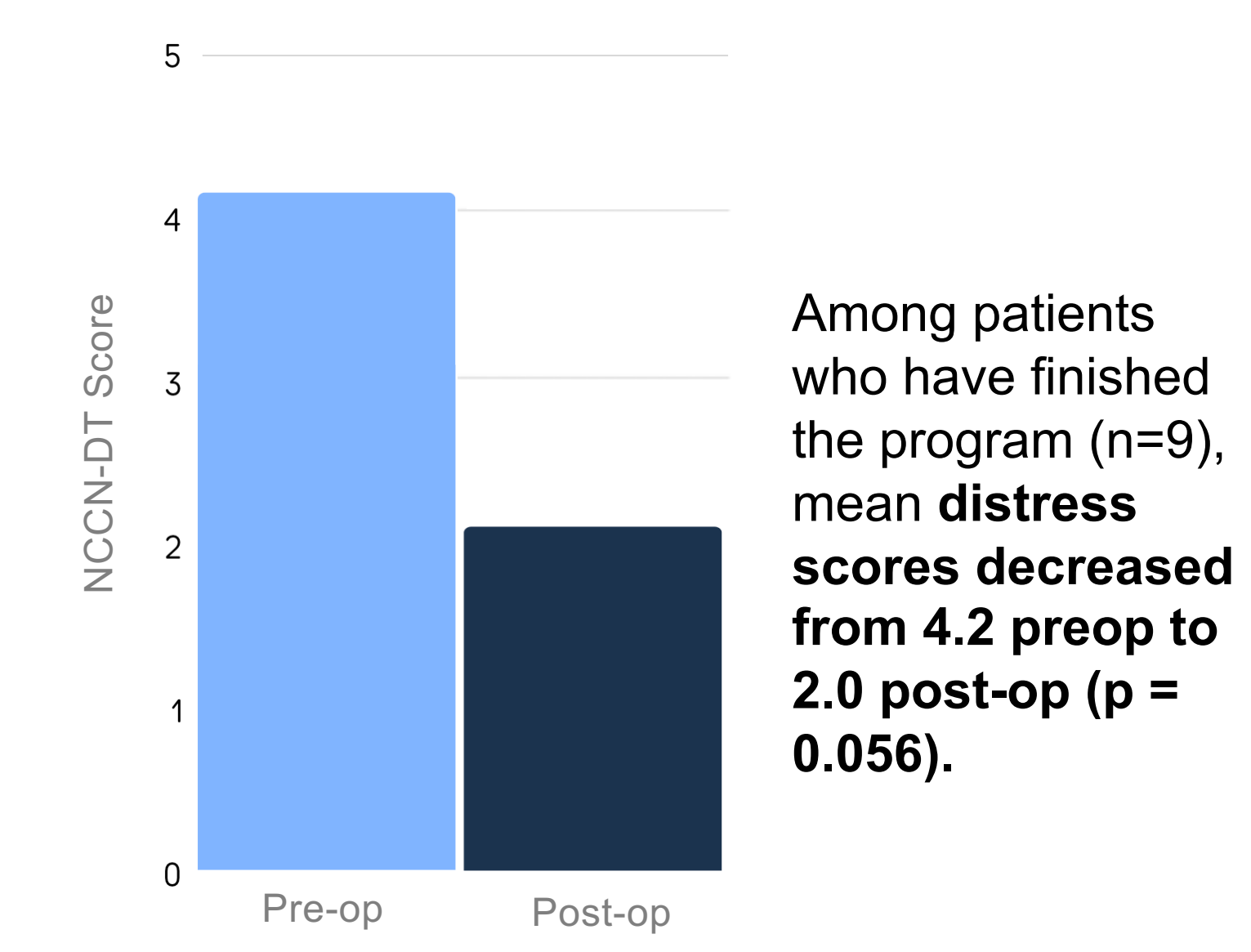


Almost half of patients reported their navigators helped them **feel more confident using MyChart**.

Two-thirds of patients felt their navigator team **improved their experience with back surgery**.

Nearly all patients said they would **recommend the program to a friend undergoing back surgery**.

Figure 2: Perioperative Distress Scores



Program Innovation

- 19 patients** participated in the program, receiving individualized support and navigation.
- 9 undergraduate students** gained experience interacting with and supporting patients as a part of a clinical team.
- 3 medical students** honed their clinical and communication skills and gained experience leading a team.

TAKEAWAYS

- Our patient navigator program has demonstrated value in supporting spine surgery patients peri-operatively.
- Patients report high levels of anxiety pre-operatively; patient navigators may help alleviate this distress.
- Patient navigators can connect patients to healthcare resources such as MyChart.
- The incorporation of undergraduate and medical students into patient navigator teams helps to facilitate shared value for both patients and navigators.

