



SPINE SURGERY PATIENT NAVIGATORS 2025-2026

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BACKGROUND

- **Problem:** Spine surgery patients often have challenging recovery periods due to high distress and mental and physical impacts.¹⁻²
- Patients who have sociodemographic disparities generally experience more postoperative challenges.³⁻⁶
- However, in other disease processes, patient navigator programs have demonstrated an improvement in patient quality of life.⁷⁻⁹
- Thus, the Spine Surgery Patient Navigators Program was designed to address disparities and provide personalized support for spine surgery patients at Duke, evaluating the programs' impact on distress, recovery, and healthcare utilization.

GOALS AND STRUCTURE

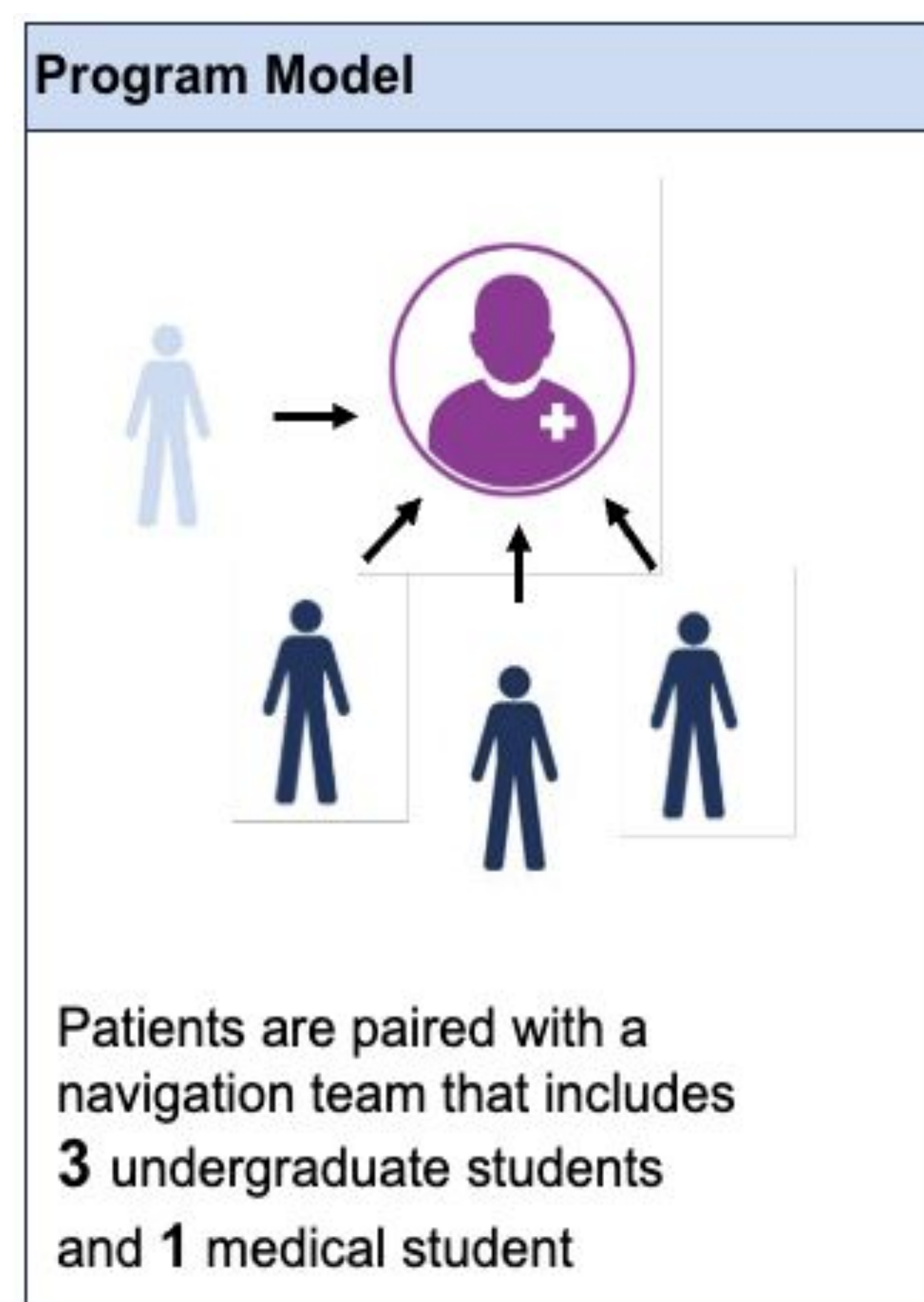
Patient-centered initiative designed to support surgical spine patients through the perioperative period with a **6-week follow up period**.

Support Patients Through the Perioperative Period of Spine Surgery

- Identified psychosocial barriers to care
- Engaged with patients through hospital visits, phone calls, and clinic appointments

Learn How to Conduct a Systematic Review and Write a Manuscript

- Screen and select studies within applicable inclusion criteria
- Synthesize current evidence to guide patient-centered support

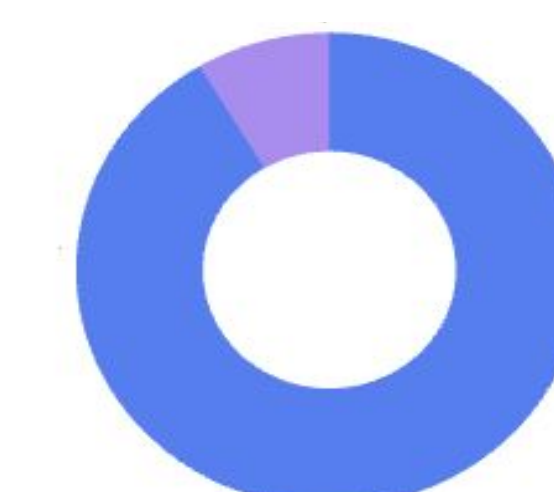


PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES

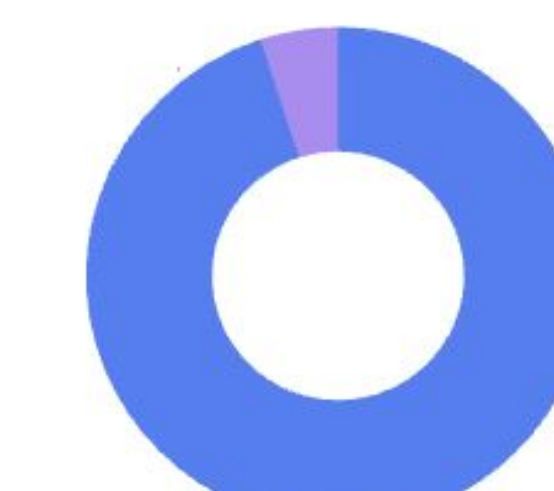


- The Spine Patient Navigators (SPN) Program was **feasible and well received**, with **100%** of patients who completed the exit survey recommending it.
- The program improved digital engagement and enhanced postoperative patient experience, with **89.5%** reporting high confidence in using MyChart.

Program Satisfaction



89.5% reported feeling very or extremely confident using MyChart.



94.7% felt their navigator team improved their post-surgery experience.



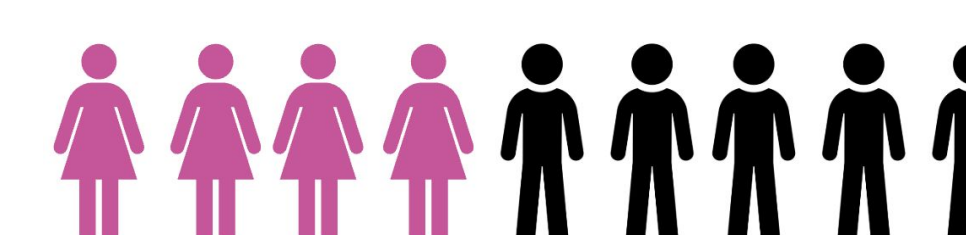
100% said they would recommend the program to a friend undergoing spine surgery.

n = 19

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Sex-Based Disparities

- **Screening:** Analyzed 12 studies with 250,648 patients
- **Conclusion:** Although the review found mixed results on the impact of sex on length of stay, female sex was consistently associated with increased non-routine discharge where sex was relevant.



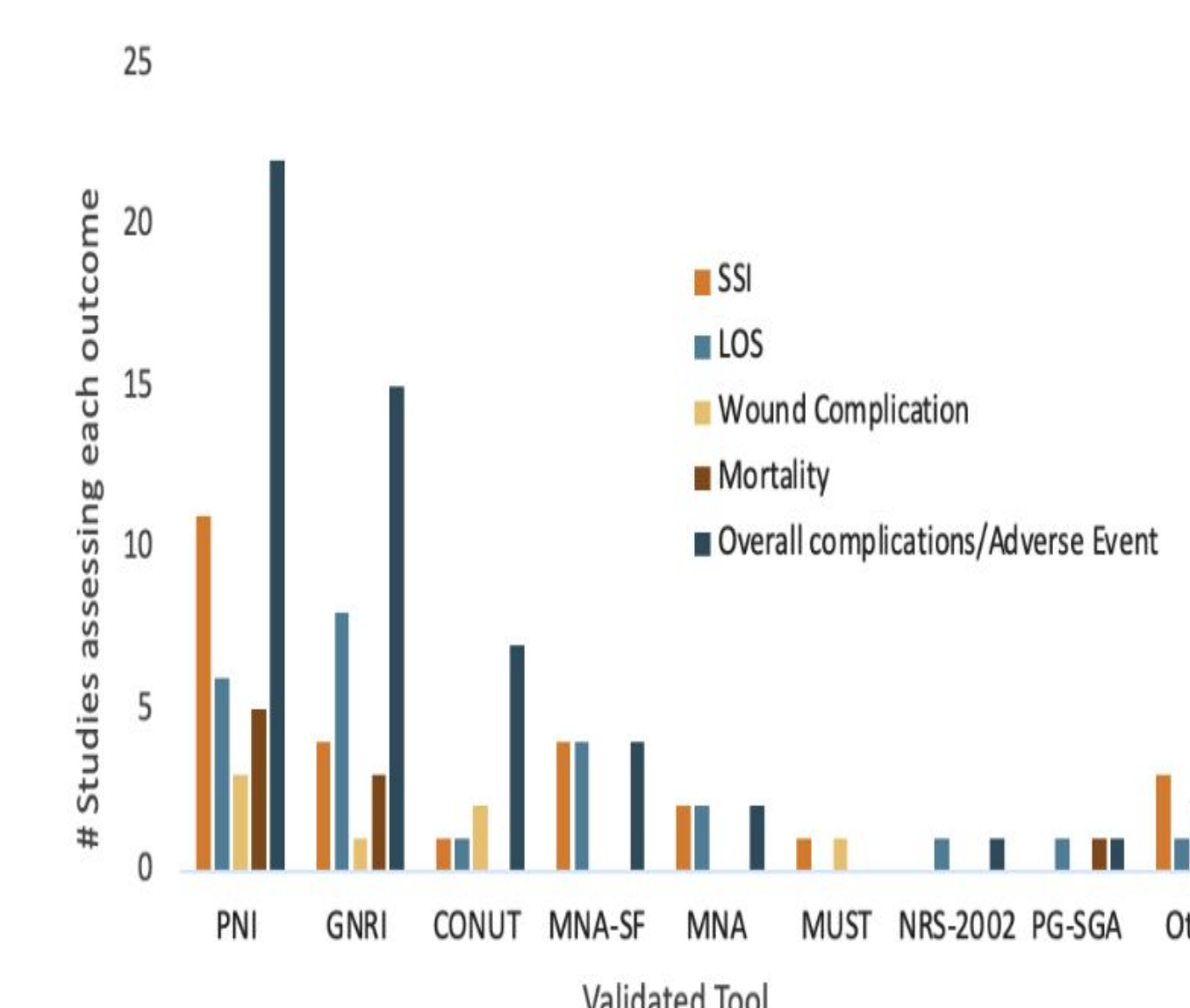
Psychosocial



- **Screening:** Analyzed 22 studies with up to 2,799 patients
- **Conclusion:** There is a clear association between patient depression, self-efficacy, and fear of movement upon patient's functional recovery in the domains of rehabilitation, physical activity behavior, and ultimate reintegration into work and society.

Nutrition

- **Screening:** Analyzed 65 with 754,493 patients
- **Conclusion:** Validated nutritional screening tools, particularly composite laboratory-based indices, are consistently associated with early postoperative complications in spine surgery.



Mobility

- **Screening:** Analyzed seven with 2,717 patients
- **Conclusion:** Enhanced recovery after surgery (ERAS) protocols in spinal tumor surgery is associated with faster early recovery, reduced opioid use, and no increase in complications.

