

Exploring the Barriers: A Survey Analysis on Declined Breast Reconstruction Among Breast Cancer Patients



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BACKGROUND

Breast cancer at times requires a mastectomy, and post-mastectomy reconstruction can be essential for restoring patients' aesthetic and psychological well-being.

Despite its importance, 48-49% of patients at our institution have declined breast reconstruction, highlighting broader disparities in education and access to care.

PROJECT AIM

This quality improvement project aims to identify barriers to breast reconstruction, focusing on disparities in education and access to care to promote equitable decision-making.

A cross-sectional phone survey will be conducted with patients at ECU Health who were eligible for breast reconstruction but declined between 2022 and 2024.

SURVEY DESIGN

The phone-based survey is expected to last 5-10 minutes. The survey's purpose will be explained and permission for participation will be requested.

The questions will cover the following areas:

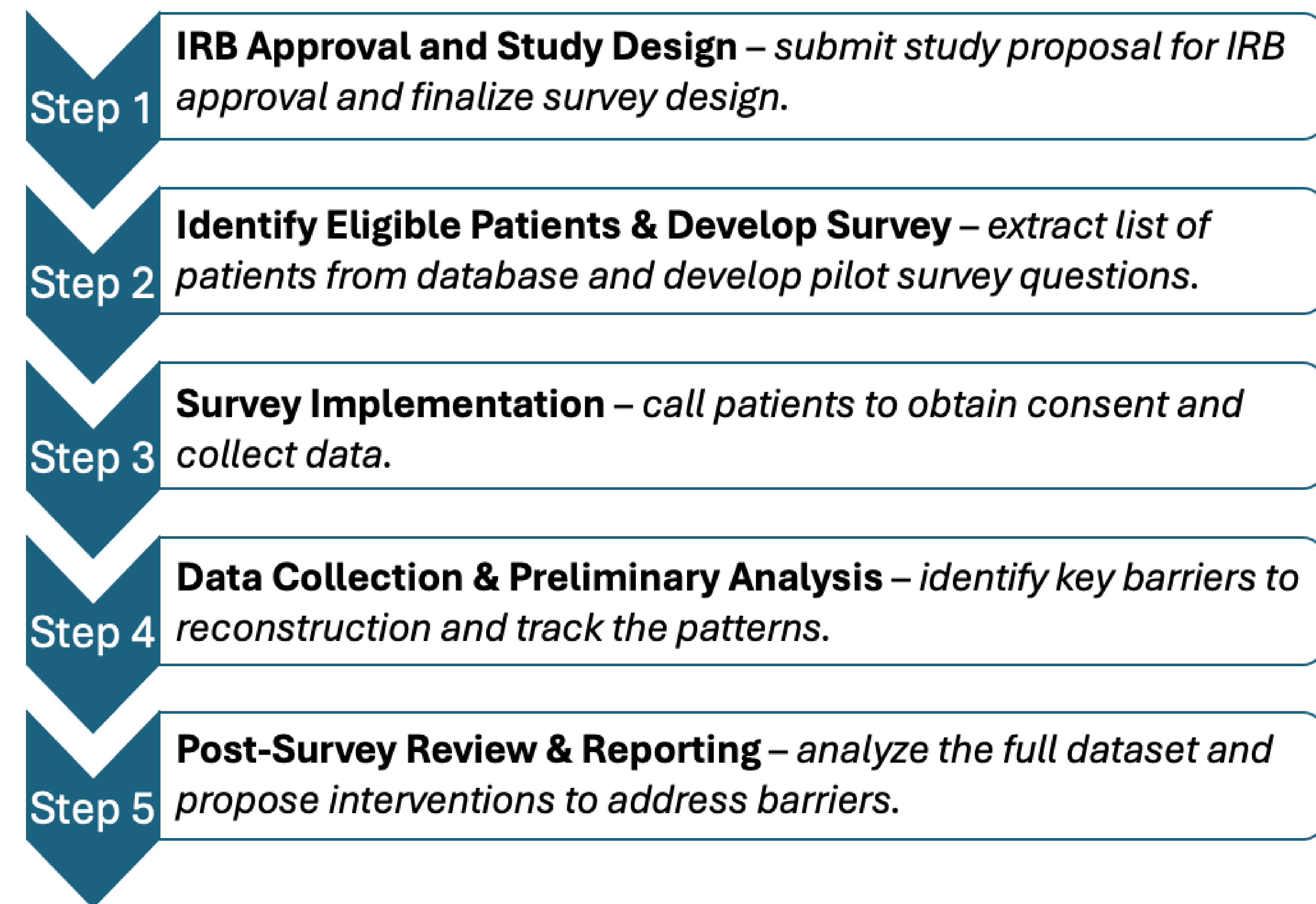
- Whether patients were offered plastic surgery consultation
- If they had seen plastic surgery to discuss reconstruction options
- Whether they were a suitable candidate (if not, the reasoning)

Additional reasons for declining will be reviewed, including but not limited to:

- Financial/transportation concerns, age
- Need for additional surgeries/procedures
- Knowing someone with breast reconstruction complications

PROJECT DESIGN, CHANGES MADE (PDSA CYCLES)

Figure 1: Step-by-step Process Flow.



LESSONS LEARNED

This project underscored the complex interplay of various factors – financial, psychosocial, educational - play in patient decision-making regarding breast reconstruction. We learned that addressing these barriers early in the treatment process can lead to more informed and equitable choices for patients. A collaborative approach involving healthcare providers, social workers, and patient educators will be key to improving access to post-mastectomy reconstruction.

NEXT STEPS

Building on our preliminary findings, the next steps include performing the data collection and an in-depth analysis of the survey data to identify specific trends and correlations among the reported barriers.

We aim to collaborate with multidisciplinary teams to develop tailored interventions addressing these challenges.

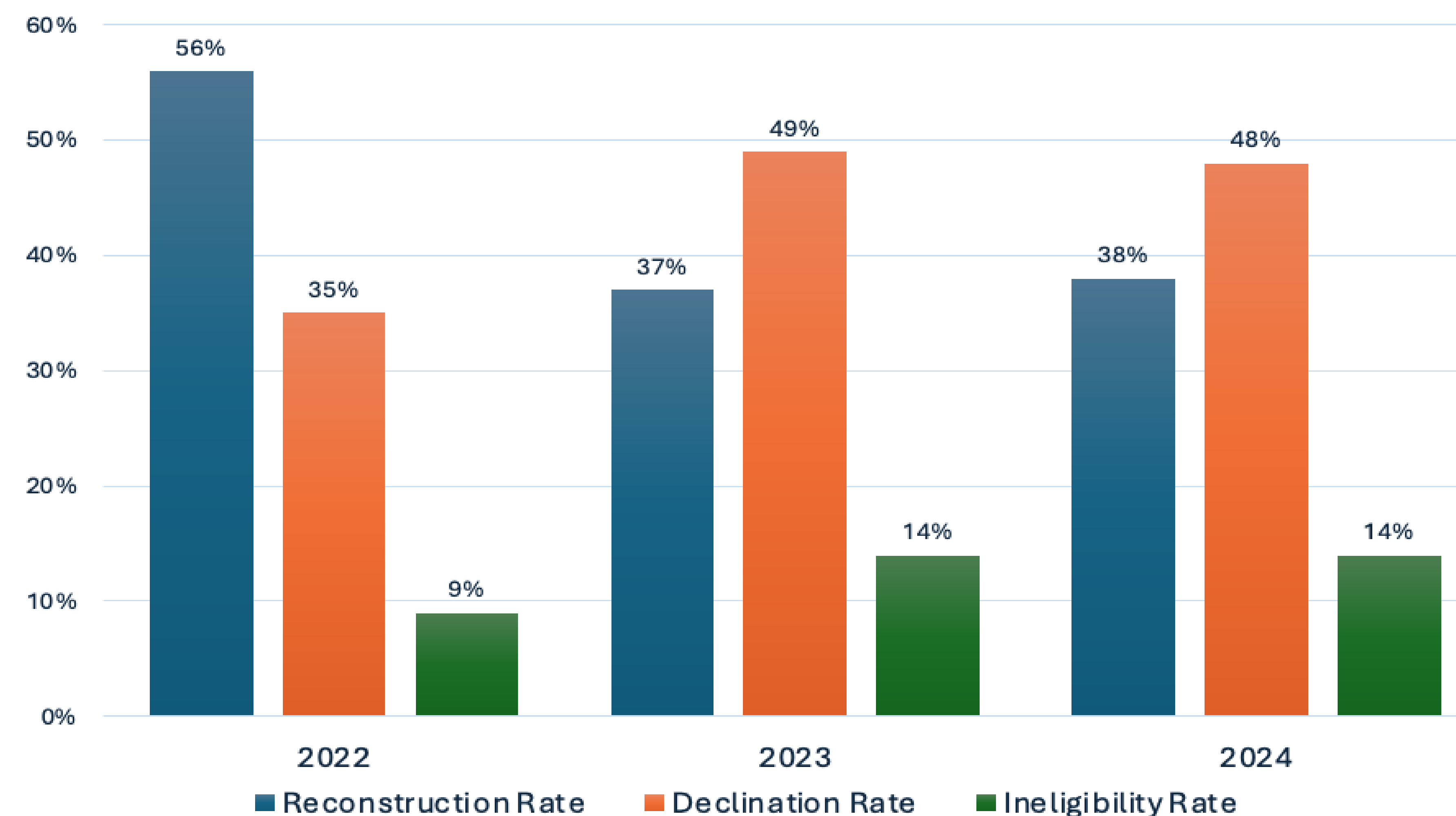
We will present the data at regional and national medical conferences to educate the healthcare community about perceived barriers, with the goal of enhancing the quality of care for this patient population.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Dr. Karinn Chambers for her invaluable support and mentorship. I am also grateful to the Research Distinction Track at the Brody School of Medicine for generously funding this presentation opportunity.

RESULTS

Figure 2: Trends in Post-Mastectomy Breast Reconstruction Decisions.



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