

Partnering to identify patient-, caregiver-, and clinician-identified research priorities for seniors' health

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Introduction

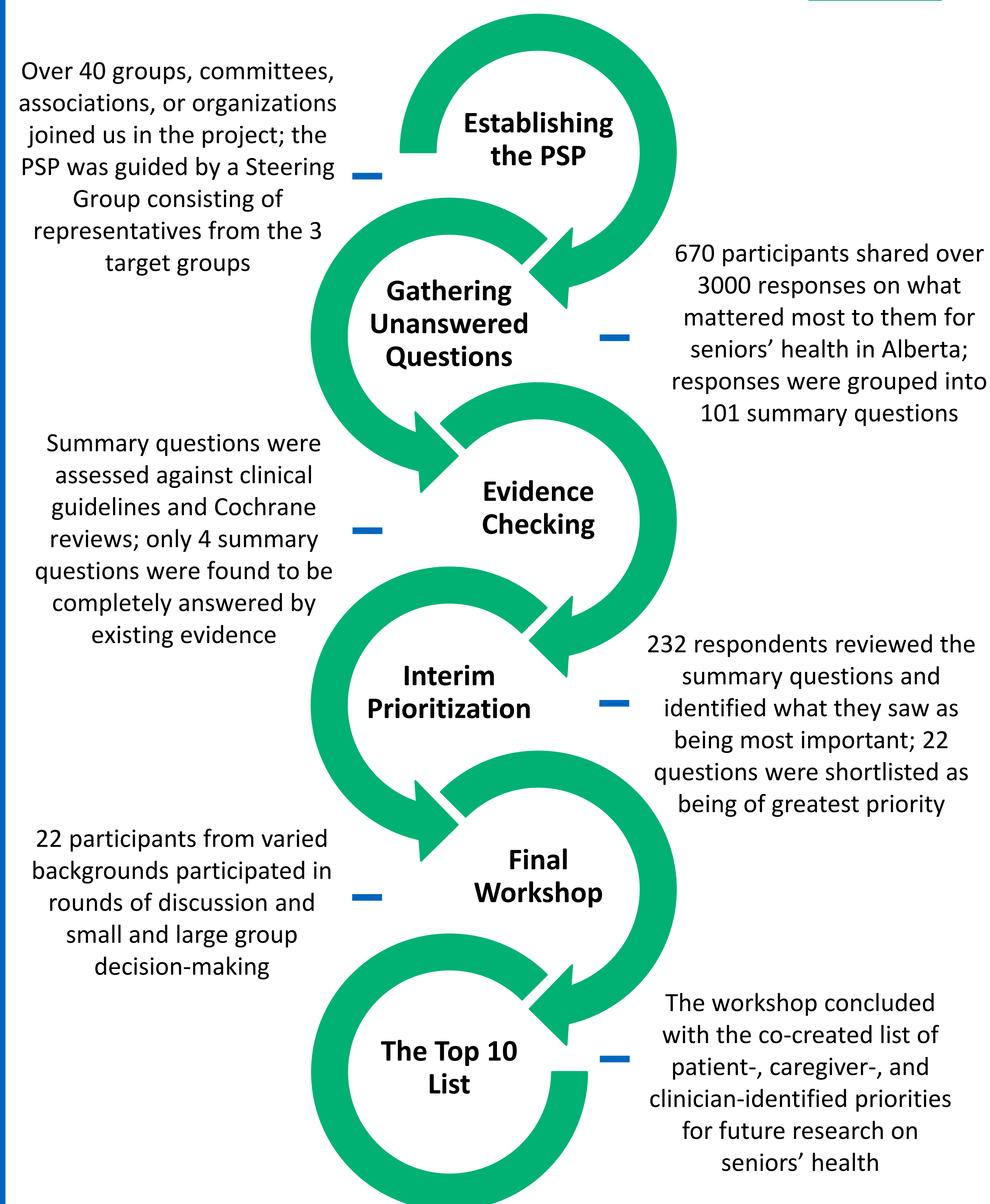
- Traditionally, research is conducted on investigator driven research questions or topics of interest to research funders
- Topics that matter most to patients and clinicians are not always adequately addressed
- Research prioritization exercises that meaningfully engage research end-users can help to identify topics of greatest importance to these groups
- The Seniors Health Strategic Clinical Network™ (SCN) conducted a Research Priority Setting Partnership (PSP) to bring older adults, caregivers, clinicians, and representative organisations together on equal footing to identify what they felt mattered most to seniors' health in Alberta

Methods

- We followed the James Lind Alliance approach for priority setting (www.jla.nihr.ac.uk)
- After identifying and recruiting partners, we conducted two rounds of surveys to learn from target respondents what mattered most to them and to begin to shortlist the topics
- Target respondents were:
 - Older adults (65+ years of age),
 - Caregivers of older adults (spouses, family members, friends, neighbours), and
 - Clinicians working with older adults (doctors, nurses, care aides, allied health providers, pharmacists, social workers) in Alberta
- The final list of topics that future research should address was co-created through discussion and decision making by attendees during an interactive in-person workshop

For more information, please contact Dr. Heather Hanson, Assistant Scientific Director, Seniors Health Strategic Clinical Network™ (Heather.Hanson@ahs.ca).

Results



The Top 10 List:

1. What strategies best allow older adults to remain independent for as long as possible?
2. In what ways can the healthcare system become more proactive, instead of reactive, in addressing and encouraging prevention of disease/disability?
3. In what ways can healthcare service accessibility for older adults living in a rural community be improved?
4. How can geriatric-related knowledge among healthcare providers be improved and applied when caring for older adults?
5. What are the optimal ways to ensure healthcare providers take into consideration the goals and wishes of the older adult during care/treatment?
6. What can be done to increase availability of dementia-related care and services for older adults?
7. What interventions and programs best enable older adults to more easily navigate the healthcare system?
8. What are the most effective programs and services which can be provided to caregivers to combat burnout and stress when caring for older adults?
9. What is the most effective strategy to ensure an optimal transition between care settings for older adults?
10. How can healthcare encounters be restructured to allow older adults sufficient time with providers to discuss complex concerns in one appointment?

Discussion

- The design and conduct of the PSP was shaped through patients, caregiver, and clinician collaboration and has resulted in a community-generated direction for future research
- The Top 10 List presents an opportunity to align knowledge production with the gaps in knowledge needs in a truly patient-oriented approach
- We will use the Top 10 List to inform future Seniors Health SCN research participation, funding, and support decisions
- We call on stakeholders to champion the uptake of the list and to promote, advocate for, and participate in research on one of the top 10 questions