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Purpose

- To summarize existing literature on health consumerism, in order to ascertain the development and role of health consumers, as well as the significance of consumer geared health science technologies.

Introduction

- Historically, healthcare systems have been accepted as running on compliance based patient-provider interaction models (1). Compliance refers to a model where patients follow healthcare practitioner orders with minimal input into the interaction (2)

- New models based on concordance have begun to emerge which place the patient in a position of equal responsibility and power in the decision making process regarding their health and treatment (2)

- In part, these shifts have been driven by increased numbers of web and technology enabled health information sources (3).

- Enhanced health information access and personal choice for patients over where and how knowledge and services are accessed have been captured in the introduction of the term health consumer to health care discourse. The term health consumer as it is often defined implies an active role of patients in assessing and deciding healthcare options(4).



Results

- A total of 151 articles were reviewed. No articles passed criteria for 1900-1960.
- The literature suggests that the health consumer is poised to become the driving force behind future health care development in terms of both service and delivery (5).
- Health consumerism is being largely realized by consumers through a growing consumer targeted technological market (6,7).
- Publicly funded health care systems appear to be marginally aware of the shift towards health consumerism; adaption is slow and is encouraging the growth of the private sector (8,9).
- Level of health consumerism varies; health consumerism can be realized for self-care, advocacy, and autonomic purposes (10).

Conclusion

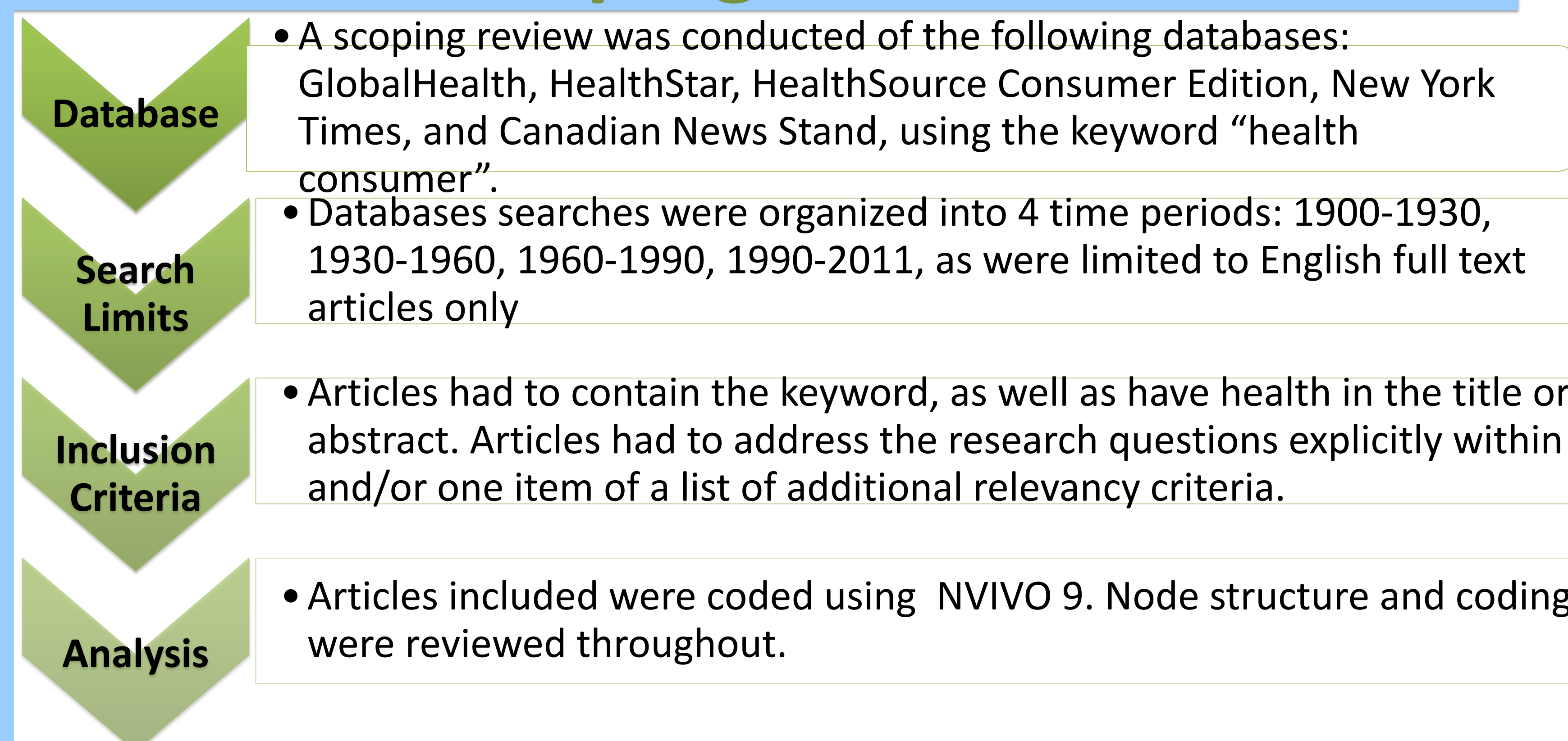
- Health consumerism may be guiding the development of health technology and services, but has not yet been explicitly recognized or studied in its influence to do so.
- Regardless, a health culture emphasizing individual empowerment through knowledge, control and autonomy is growing.
- The transition from patient to consumer within health care marks a shift of both power and expected roles between health services providers and consumers. The transition towards consumerism in health settings is marked by the influx of consumer geared health technology.

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Methods: Scoping Literature Review



Ongoing Research

Exploration of:

- The acceptance and practical implementation of health consumerism. This includes the appropriate incorporation of health consumerism into the public system (if at all)
- The impact of health consumerism on the health outcomes of different groups, as well as the minimization of access and literacy gaps.

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