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MET AND UNMET NEEDS IN SURVIVORS OF BREAST CANCER AND THEIR PARTNERS

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

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Background

- **Transition phase** from breast cancer patient to survivor
 - ▣ Little attention in literature
 - ▣ Indications of particularly challenging period for patients and partners
- Defined as **first six months** after completion of primary treatment
 - ▣ Surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy

Aims research project

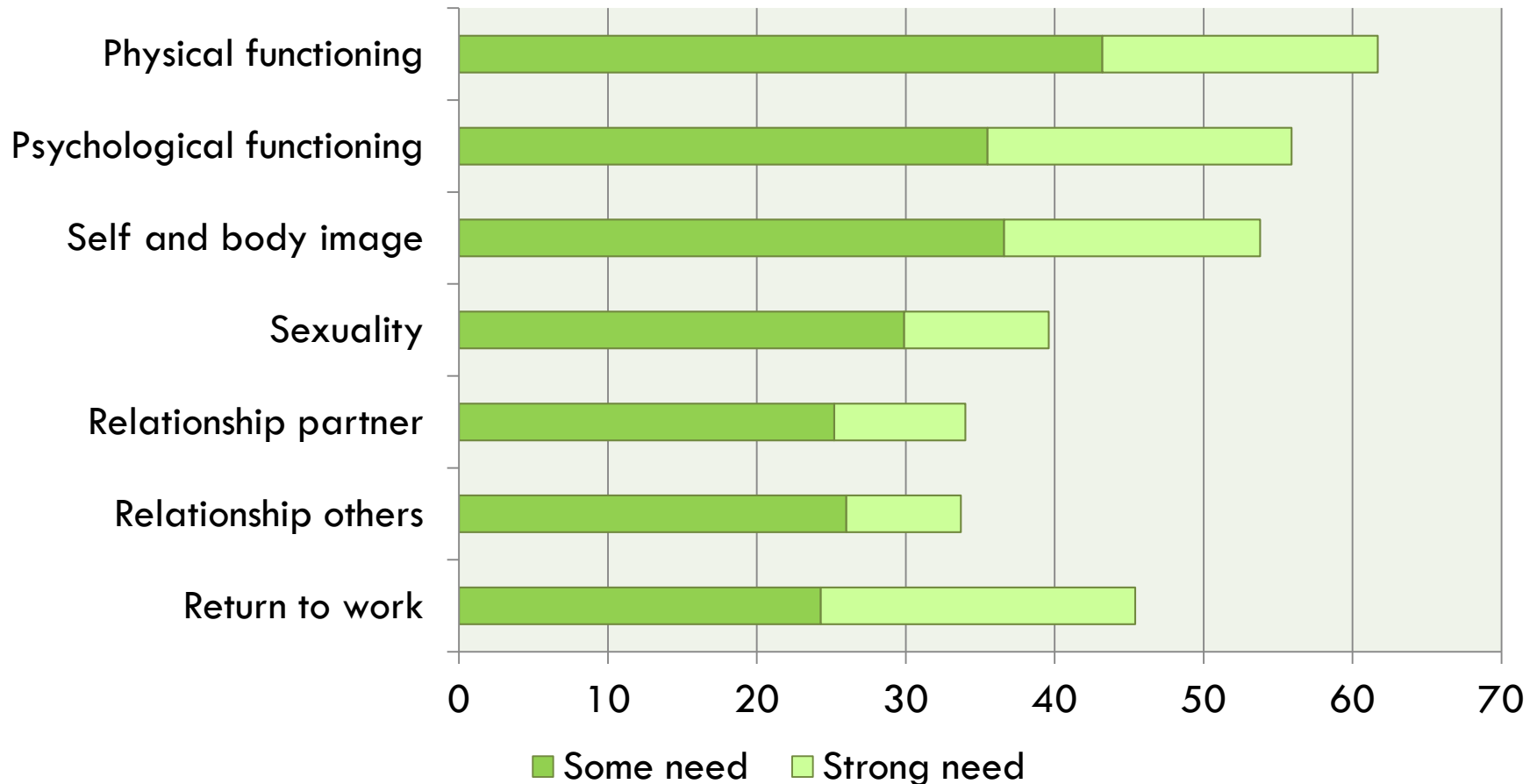
- Identification of breast cancer survivors' and partners' **care needs**
 - (unmet) needs for information and support
 - Preferences regarding post-treatment care provision
- Determination of **characteristics** indicative of care needs
 - Sociodemographic
 - Medical
 - Psychosocial

Methods

- Cross-sectional **questionnaire studies** among breast cancer survivors (n=465) and partners (n=84)
- Self-developed **care needs questionnaire**
 - Topics based on literature and focus group interviews
 - (unmet) needs, preferred time and source of information
- Elaborate assessment of **psychosocial** characteristics
 - Anxiety, depression, self-esteem, body image, illness representations, coping strategies, social support etc

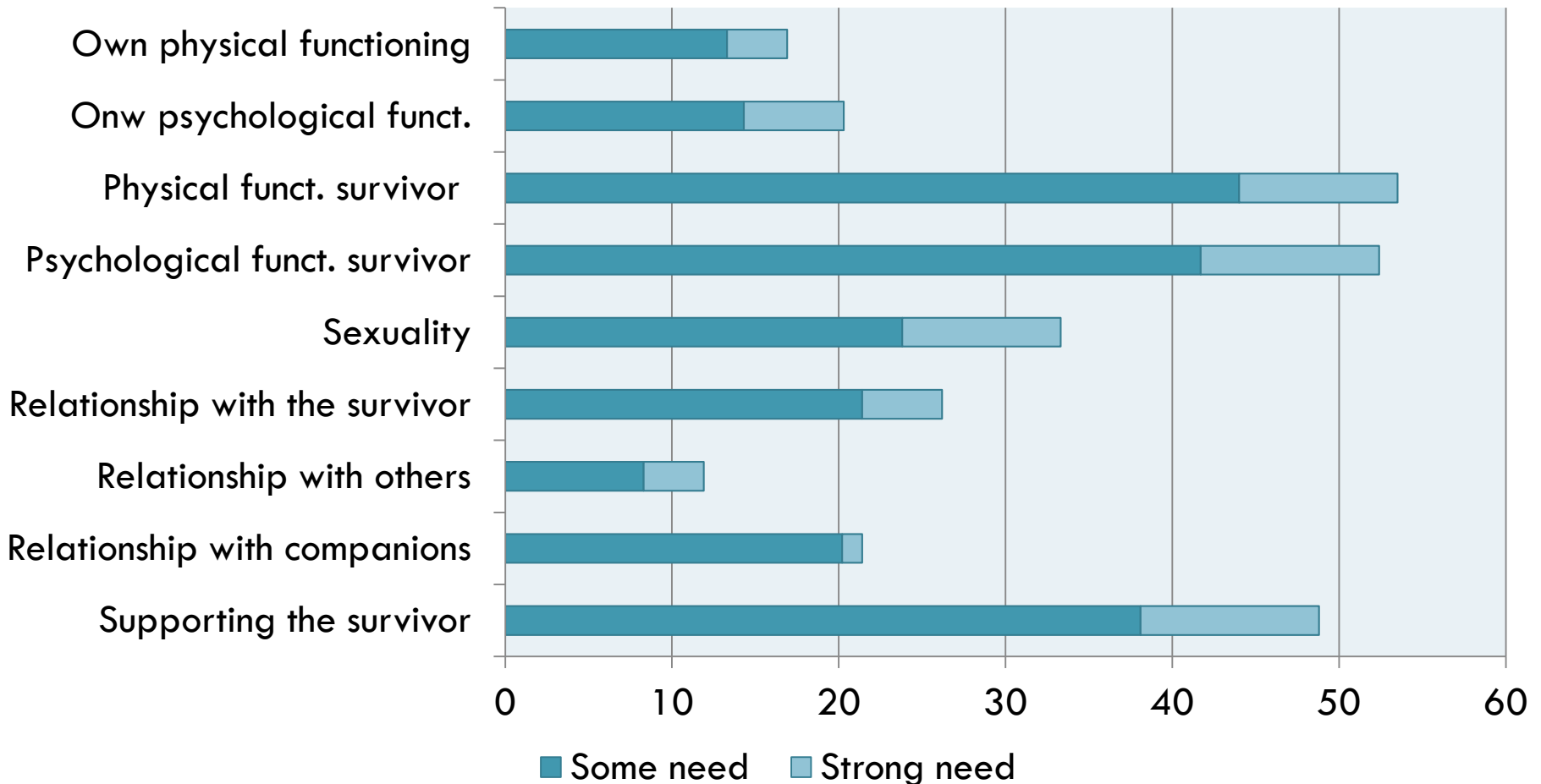
Needs for information and support

□ Breast cancer survivors



Needs for information and support

□ Intimate partners of breast cancer survivors



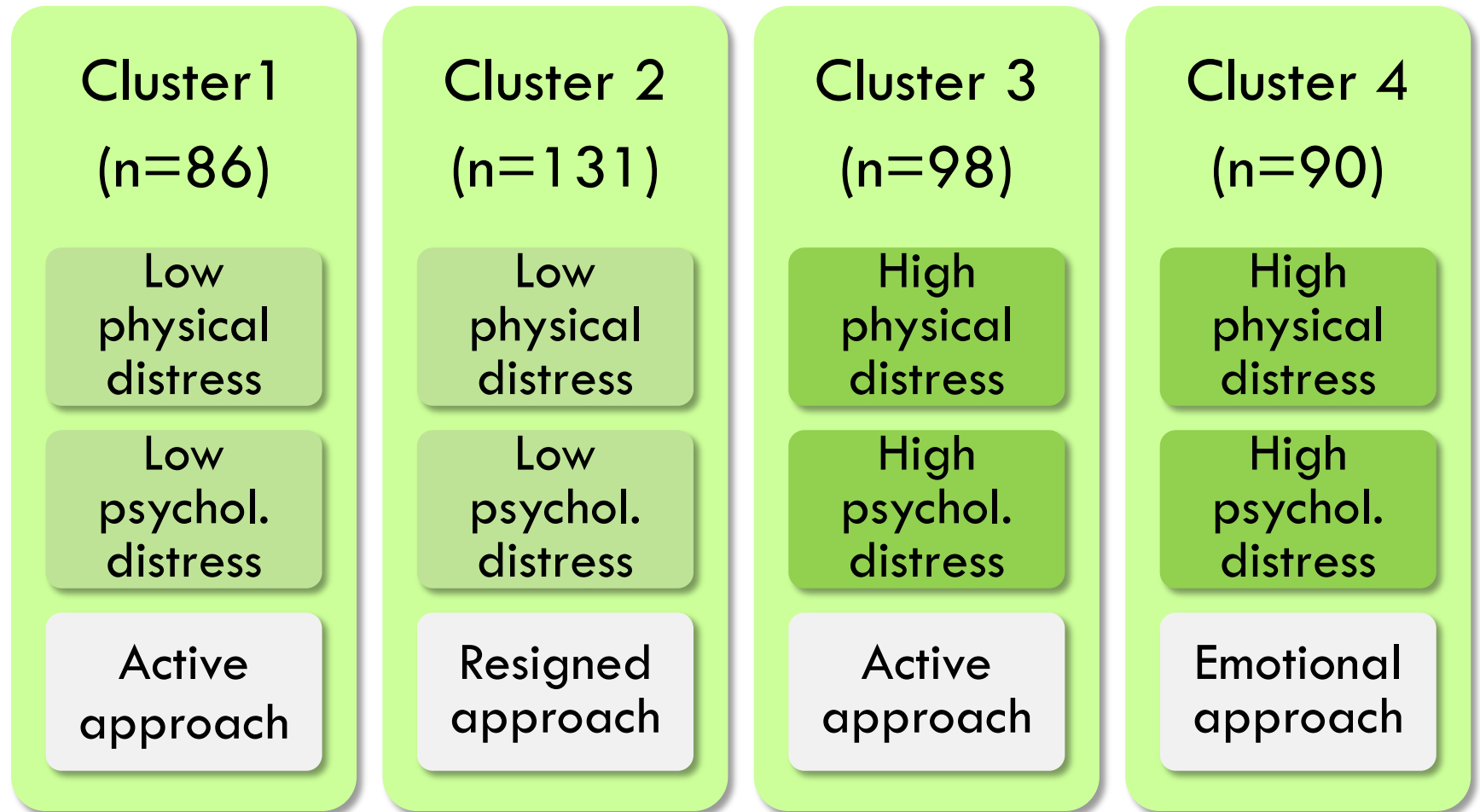
Unmet needs & care preferences

- **Unmet needs** (partially or totally unmet) reported by 78 to 100% of survivors and partners
 - Highest unmet needs survivors: sexuality, self and body image, relationship with partner
 - Highest unmet needs partners: sexuality, relationship with survivor and relationship with others
- Care needs **throughout illness trajectory**
- Preferred **sources** of information and support
 - Informative brochures, informative websites, Information sessions, consults with psychologist

Associated characteristics

- Sociodemographic characteristics
 - Breast cancer survivors: higher care needs associated with **younger age** and **lower income**
 - Intimate partners: no significant associations
- Medical characteristics
 - Breast cancer survivors: no significant associations
 - Intimate partners: no significant associations

Psychosocial profiles of survivors

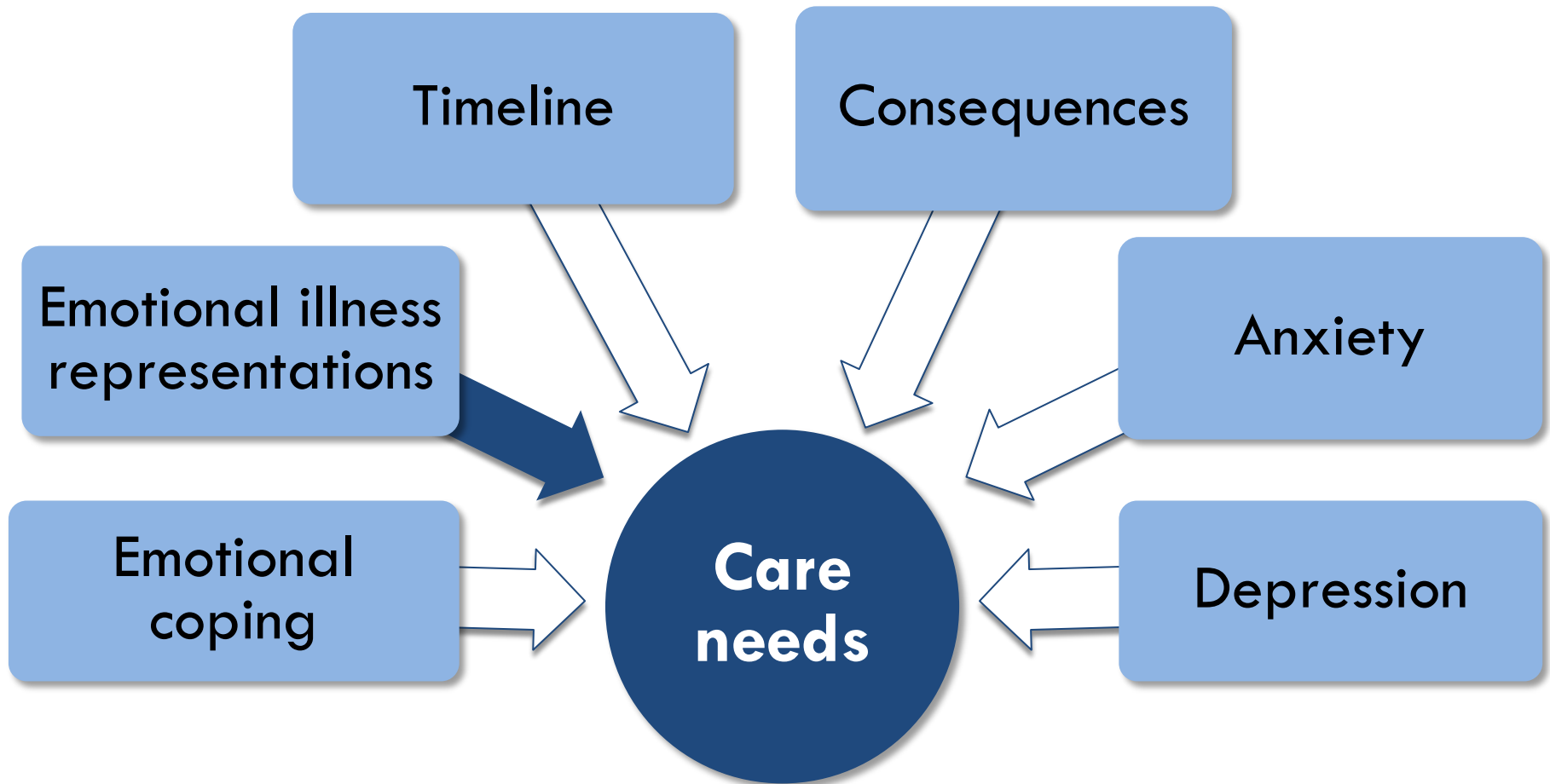


Lower care needs



Higher care needs

Psychosocial characteristics of partners



Conclusions



- Expanding care to post-treatment phase
- Focus on survivors as well as partners
- Stepped care approach
- Basis for optimization of post-treatment care



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Thank you for your attention

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- Pauwels E, Charlier C, De Bourdeaudhuij I, Lechner L & Van Hoof E (2011). Care needs after primary breast cancer treatment. Survivors' associated sociodemographic and medical characteristics. *Psycho-Oncology* (Article first published online: SEP 28, 2011)
- Pauwels E, De Bourdeaudhuij I, Charlier C, Lechner L & Van Hoof E (2012). Psychosocial characteristics associated with breast cancer survivors' intimate partners in need for information and support after primary treatment. *Journal of Psychosocial Oncology*, 30 (1), 1-20.



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