

## Aims

This scoping review aims to investigate the landscape of marketing in clinical trials literature, identifying potential gaps, and to consider how the gaps could be filled. This scoping review fits in a wider research whose overall aim is to develop a clinical trial marketing toolkit offering a practical guidance to trial teams to improve recruitment and retention.

## Background

Recruitment and retention into RCTs is key to the success of any trial yet remains a major challenge. Recruiting and retaining participants is akin to an organization trying to engage with new audiences. Marketing is one way in which organisations engage with audiences as a strategic approach to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offerings of value to consumers.

Clinical trials could benefit from implementing principles and practices of marketing by enabling trialists to better understand how to improve the trial experience for the participants, recruiting sites, clinicians, and policy makers.

## Methods

A scoping review with robust and methodical Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) terms article search on Medline, Cochrane Library, CINAHL, Web of Science, SSRN, clinicaltrials.gov. and Google scholar

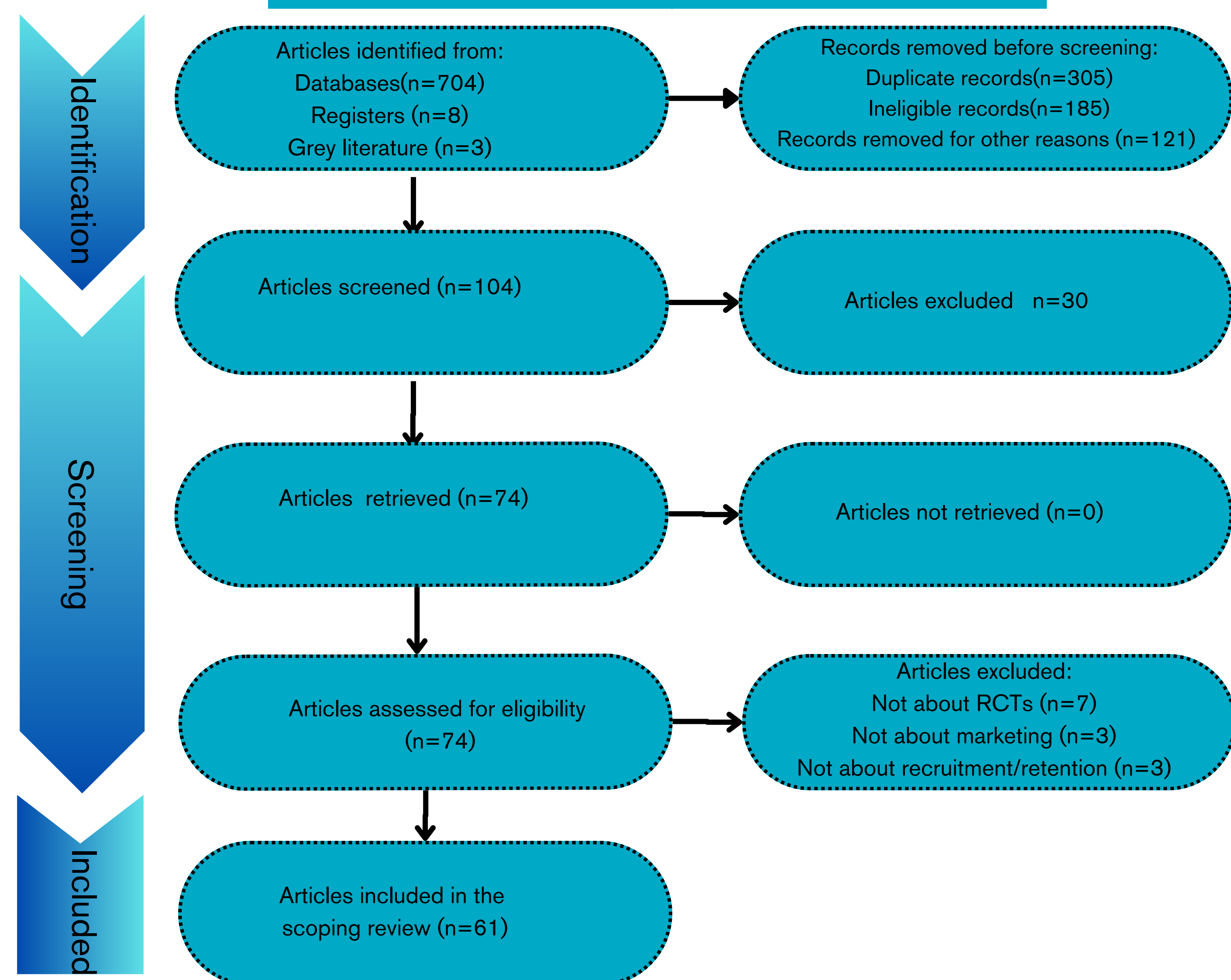
### Inclusion criteria

- Focus on the use of marketing activities or principles in the context of improving recruitment and retention in randomised clinical trials.
- Be written in English or published in a different language with an English translation.

### Exclusion Criteria

- Not written in English and no English translation is available

### PRISMA flow chart of article identification



## Results

### Social media and digital marketing

- Social media reported as potent, cost-effective tools with a wide reach for recruitment especially when compared to more traditional methods.
- Social media and online methods had a tendency to focus on specific demographics and privacy concerns

### Marketing costs

- Traditional marketing methods such as television and radio advertising reported to be more expensive with a relatively low yield.
- Cost is not only related to direct monetary expenses. Other variables such as time, staff resources also require considerations.

### Mixed method approach

- Multiple channels is suggested to work best, no single strategy would be universally fit across all audiences.
- Combination of recruitment strategies, mixing online methods such as social media with traditional offline methods such as flyers, posters and in-person strategies proved to be more effective

### Tailored messaging

- Emphasis placed on the importance of creating custom messages that are specific to a study and its target audience.
- Use of diverse imagery and culturally sensitive language was reported to increase effectiveness of the message

### Partnerships and co-production

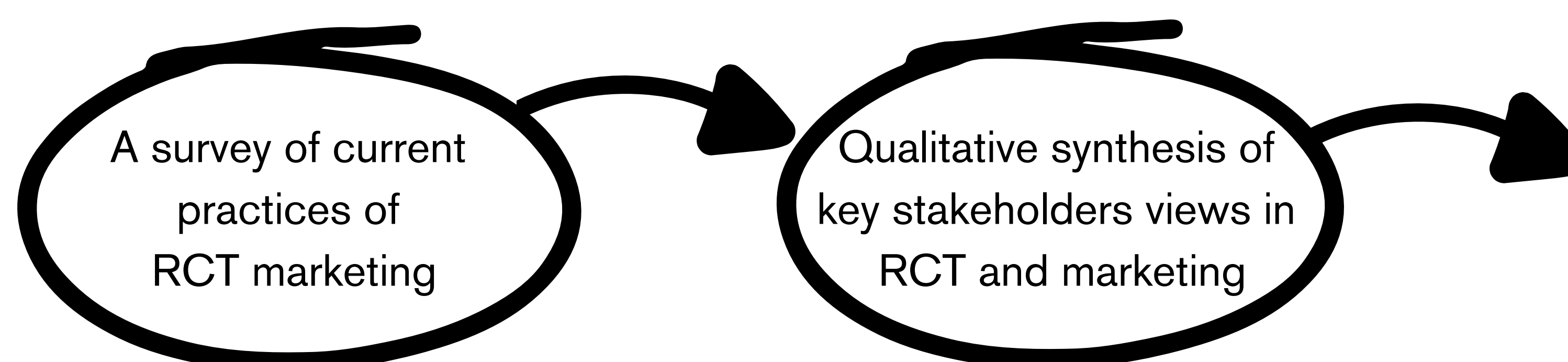
- Partnerships and co-production emerged as a way of linking various stakeholders in recruitment activity leading to improved recruitment efforts.
- Partnerships with healthcare providers and institutions greatly benefits trial teams in reaching their target audience

## Conclusion/Discussion

Marketing plays an important role in communicating the value of clinical trials and engaging target audiences. Marketing methods, encompassing both traditional methods like newspapers and radio advertising to modern approaches such as social media have proven effective in improving recruitment and retention efforts in clinical trials. However, considerations should be given to the target audience, the context of the clinical trial and the available resources. Trial teams should consider combining traditional and modern media in their marketing, tailoring their marketing messages to specific target audiences and working with partners improve recruitment and retention, as well as improve representativeness of their samples.



**WHAT  
NEXT?**



A marketing toolkit for clinical trials

\*References available upon request

