



Literature review of discharge support at Japanese acute care hospitals

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Introduction:

The hospitalization rate for acute care hospitals in Japan remains longer than other developed countries; furthermore, Japan has the largest elderly population in the world, and the number of emergency hospitalizations of elderly persons is increasing. Taken together, there may soon be insufficient beds for acute stage treatment. In 2014, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare established regional comprehensive care systems to provide medical treatment, nursing, preventative care, and home/living assistance to support discharge from acute care hospitals.

Objectives:

To conduct a literature review of discharge support from acute care hospitals to determine the issues facing discharge support in Japan.

Methods:

The Japan Medical Abstracts Society database was searched in October 2016 for nursing literature published in the past twenty years using the keywords “acute stage,” “discharge support,” and “post-discharge adjustment.” The literature content was summarized, categorized, and compared by publication year.

Results:

The keywords “acute stage” plus “discharge support” produced 79 hits; “acute stage” plus “post-discharge adjustment” produced 44. Excluding redundant hits, 58 articles concerning discharge support from acute care hospitals were retrieved (Figure 1, 2). Seven categories were extracted from the literature (Figure 3). Only six articles published in 1996–2008 focused on the roles of, challenges faced by, and education/training of post-discharge adjustment nurses. However, the number of articles on these themes increased from 2009, as did articles focusing on the current state of and challenges with discharge support. From 2011, articles focused on developing frameworks, attitude surveys, and education/training related to discharge support.

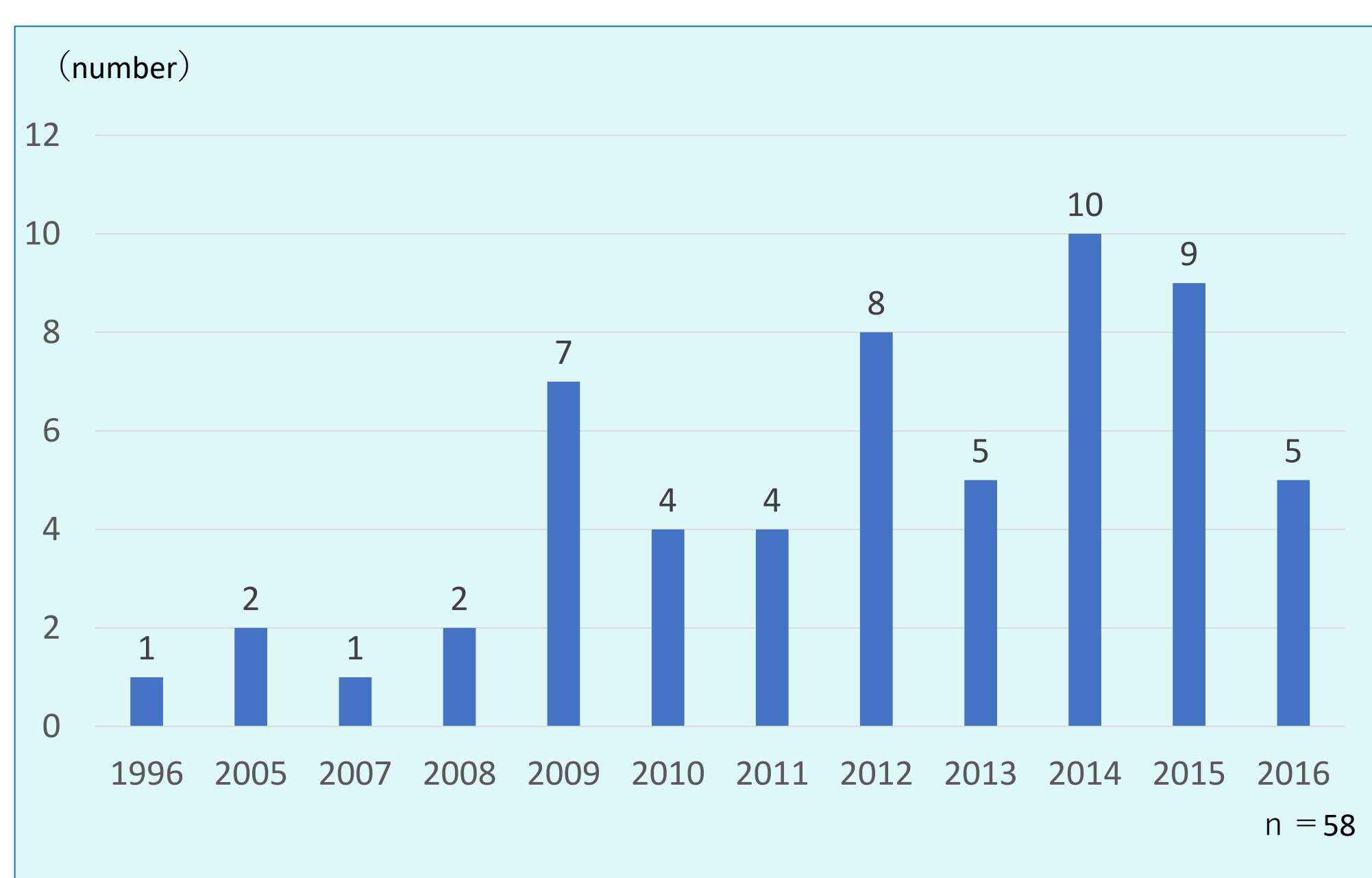


Figure 1. Number of Literatures by year

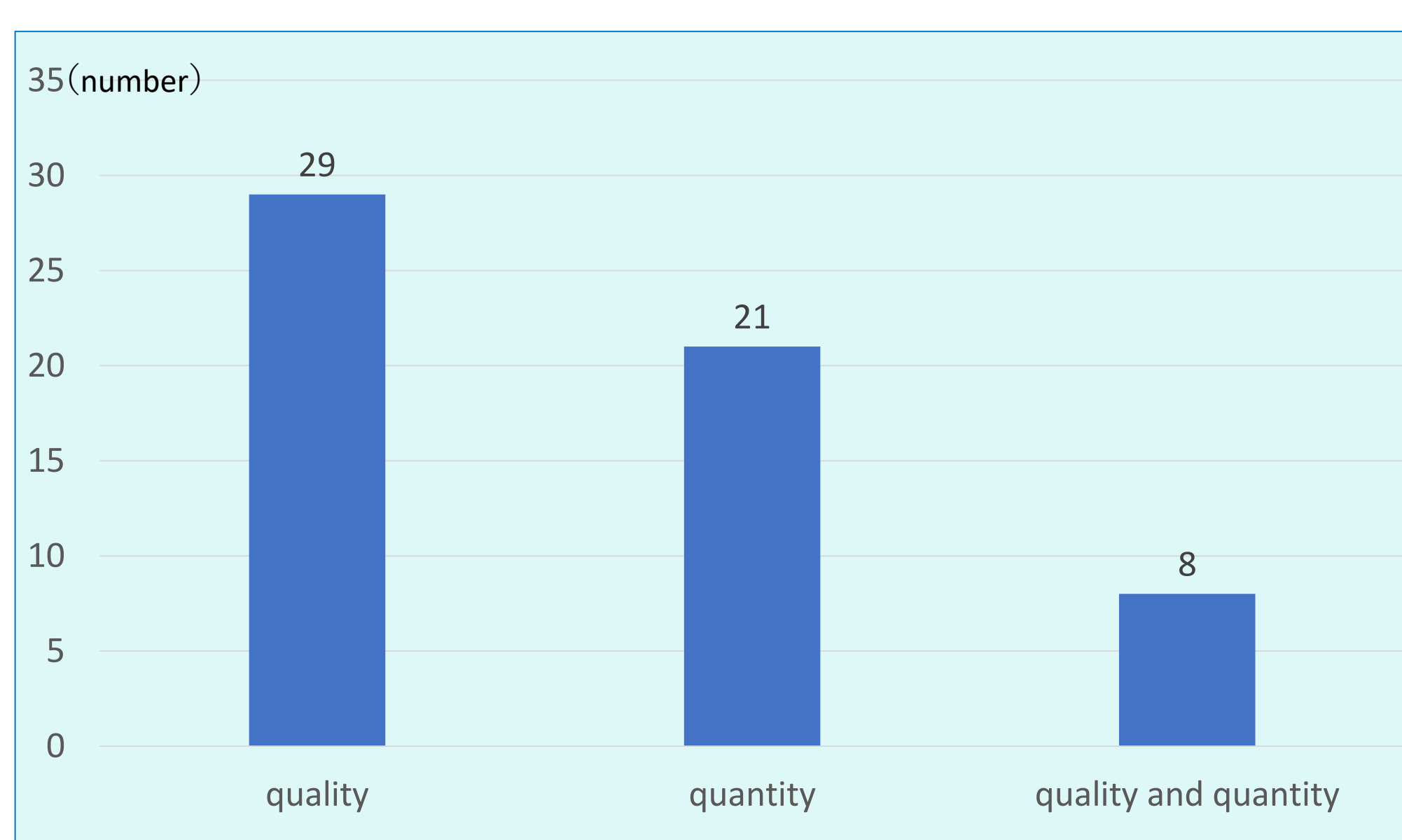


Figure 2. Type of Research method

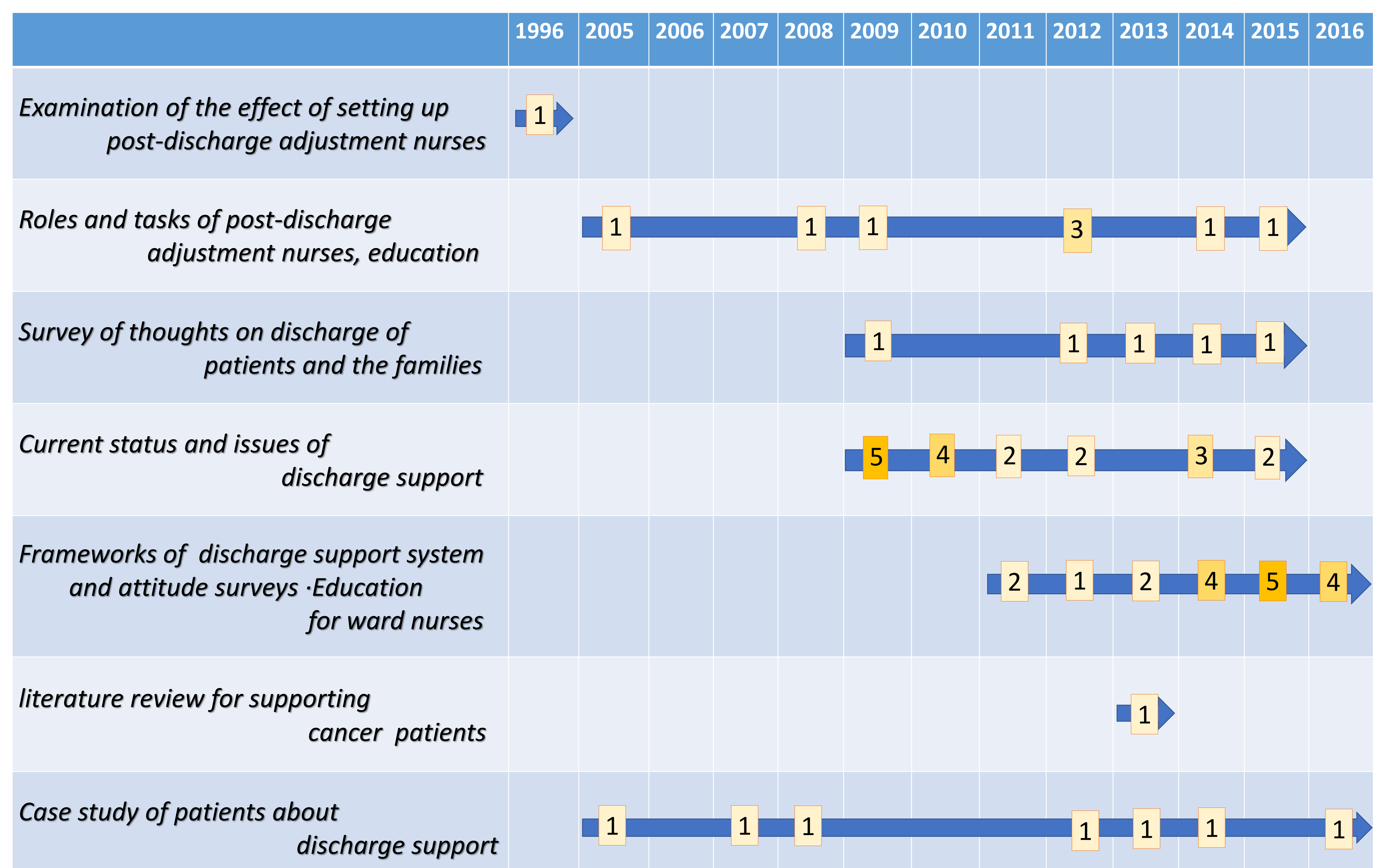


Figure 3. Transition of the Literatures about discharge support at Japanese acute hospital

Conclusion:

As hospitalization periods in Japan shorten, information on patients’ daily lives after discharge must be collected and proper guidance must be given to these patients. Establishing a discharge support system, education/training for nurses concerning discharge support, and collaboration among local visiting nurses and care managers would be important for achieving these goals.

Keywords:

Acute care hospitals, discharge support, post-discharge adjustment, regional comprehensive care systems