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Cancer-Related Weight Loss Carries Significant Concerns for both Patients and Caregivers, Study Suggests

Cancer Support Community research shows high psychosocial consequences, yet lack of understanding among cancer patients, caregivers, and health care providers regarding weight loss

SAN DIEGO, Ca. – (Jan. 28, 2017) – Cachexia, a wasting syndrome involving weight and muscle loss, affects 50 to 80 percent of cancer patients.¹ The psychosocial impact of cachexia is largely unrealized by the cancer community, according to a report presented today by the Cancer Support Community at the American Society for Clinical Oncology Survivorship Symposium.

Study participants were recruited from the [Cancer Experience Registry](#), an online platform where people facing cancer can share their experiences and identify issues that impact their lives. Participants completed a one-hour phone interview on the topic of weight loss. Both patients and caregivers were included in the study.

The Cancer Support Community found that only one-third of patients interviewed reported that their health care team addressed cancer-related weight loss during medical visits. The most common patient reported symptoms included appetite changes (80%), nausea (73%) and taste changes (60%).

The most commonly reported negative consequences for patients and caregivers are illustrated below:

Consequences	Patients (N=15)	Caregivers (N=15)
Caregiver burden worries	40%	80%
Distress about physical appearance of patient	27%	80%
Changed sense of patient identity	47%	60%
Fear of illness progression	53%	53%

“Our research suggests a disconnect between patients, caregivers, and the health care team when it comes to prioritizing cancer-related weight loss as a concern. Patients and their loved ones often feel unprepared for the impact weight loss has on their overall level of distress, making it an important topic to explore and address in clinical research,” said Joanne Buzaglo, Sr. Vice President of Research and Training at the Cancer Support Community.

¹ von Haehling S, Anker SD. Prevalence, incidence and clinical impact of cachexia: facts and numbers – update 2014. J Cachexia Sarcopenia Muscle (2014) 5(4):261–3.10.1007

About the Cancer Support Community

As the largest professionally led nonprofit network of cancer support worldwide, the Cancer Support Community (CSC) is dedicated to ensuring that all people impacted by cancer are empowered by knowledge, strengthened by action and sustained by community. CSC achieves its mission through three areas: direct service delivery, research and advocacy. The organization includes an international network of Affiliates that offer the highest quality social and emotional support for people impacted by cancer, as well as a community of support available online and over the phone. The Research and Training Institute conducts cutting-edge psychosocial, behavioral and survivorship research. CSC furthers its focus on patient advocacy through its Cancer Policy Institute, informing public policy in Washington, D.C. and across the nation. For more information, please call the toll-free Cancer Support Helpline at 888-793-9355, or visit www.CancerSupportCommunity.org. *So that no one faces cancer alone*[®]

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