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### **Cancer-related distress and cost of care concerns among gastric cancer patients**

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**Background:** Individuals with gastric cancer (GC) are at risk for significant physical, psychological, and financial burden related to their illness and cost of care. This study characterizes cancer-related distress and concerns among survivors of GC and related cancers and the support survivors receive from their health care team for these concerns.

**Methods:** Of 110 GC survivors enrolled in the Cancer Support Community's online Cancer Experience Registry, 30 (43% stomach, 37% esophageal, 20% GIST) rated their level of concern (0=not at all; 4=very seriously) about psychological, emotional, physical and practical concerns (27 items). Risk for clinically significant distress was identified via a 4-item subscale ( $\alpha=0.86$ , cutoff score = 6.) Participants also completed the Impact of Events (IES) intrusion subscale and questions about their healthcare team's involvement in addressing concerns.

**Results:** Participant median age was 61 years; median time since diagnosis was 3 years. 23% experienced recurrence; 37% had metastatic disease. The highest ranked concerns (rated moderately to very seriously) included: eating and nutrition (62%); fatigue (62%); health insurance or money worries (59%); worry about the future (59%); feeling sad or depressed (50%); changes or disruptions to work, school, or home life (48%); sleep problems (48%); and worry about family (48%). Half of respondents (50%) were at risk for clinically significant emotional distress; 39% reported intrusive thoughts about the cost of cancer care. Fewer than half indicated their health care team asked about emotional distress (43%), lifestyle (43%), work (40%), finances (37%), or family (33%). Participants wished for more help with emotions related to cancer (57%), long-term side effects (55%), and financial advice/assistance (52%).

**Conclusions:** Substantial proportions of gastric cancer survivors express concern about physical symptoms, emotional distress, and financial burden, yet many report they are not counseled about these concerns. Efforts are needed to reduce distress and the financial burden associated with gastric cancer to reduce their potential impact on quality of life, treatment adherence, and other illness outcomes.