

# Non-metastatic and Metastatic Breast Cancer Patients' Priorities When Considering a Treatment Decision

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## BACKGROUND

- Health care value is of increasing importance in light of rising health care costs, yet not enough is known about patients' perspectives on value in health care.
- Understanding patients' priorities when deciding upon treatment is important for effectively measuring and communicating value.

## AIMS

- This study examined 1) non-metastatic breast (BC) and metastatic breast (MBC) cancer patients' priorities when deciding upon breast cancer treatment, and 2) whether differences existed in priorities among BC vs. MBC populations, who are subject to different illness trajectories and associated costs of care.

## METHODS

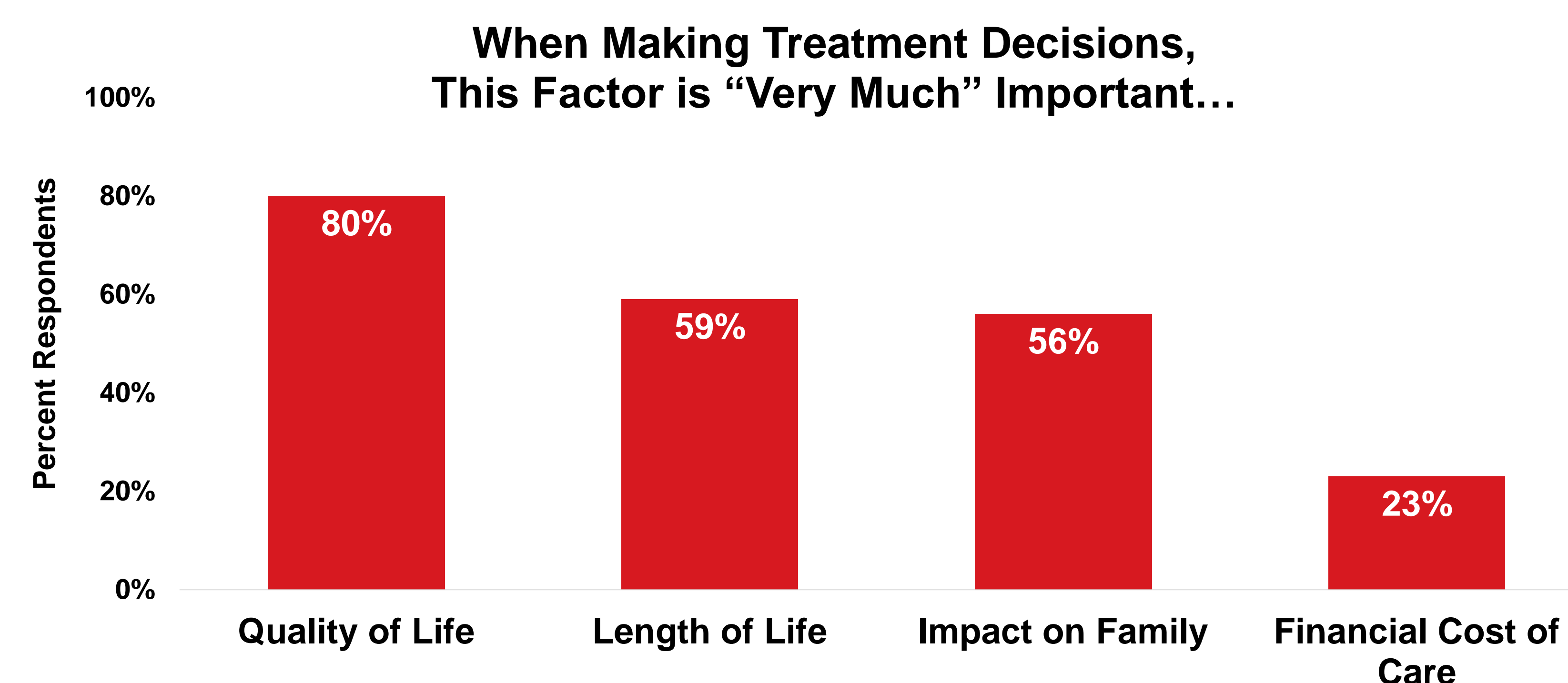
- 221 BC and 91 MBC survivors enrolled in the online Cancer Experience Registry answered questions about priorities when making a cancer treatment decision.
- Participants rated the importance (1 = *Not at all* to 5 = *Very much*) of four factors when making a treatment decision:
  - financial cost of care
  - length of life
  - quality of life
  - impact on family
- Participants also assigned an ordinal importance rank (1 = *Most important* to 4 = *Least important*) for each factor.
- Finally, participants considered two factors at a time, indicating which had greater impact on their decision (e.g., quality of life or financial cost of treatment).
- Differences between BC and MBC were examined with chi-square, independent t-tests and Wilcoxon rank-sum tests. Combined results are presented if there were no significant differences.

## PARTICIPANTS

	BC		MBC	
	n	%	n	%
<b>N = 312</b>				
Age (median)*	58 years range 33-82		54 years range 32-86	
Non-Hispanic White	189	86%	77	85%
Years since diagnosis (median)*	4.5 years range <1 - 20		3 years range <1 - 32	
Employment status				
Working full time*	88	41%	28	31%
On disability*	16	8%	27	31%
Income <\$60,000*	58	35%	38	50%

\*Statistically significant differences between BC and MBC,  $p < .05$ .

## RESULTS



- For both BC and MBC patients, the greatest proportion of participants (80%) indicated quality of life was "very much" important when deciding upon treatment.
- Financial cost of care was least often viewed as "very much" important (23%).

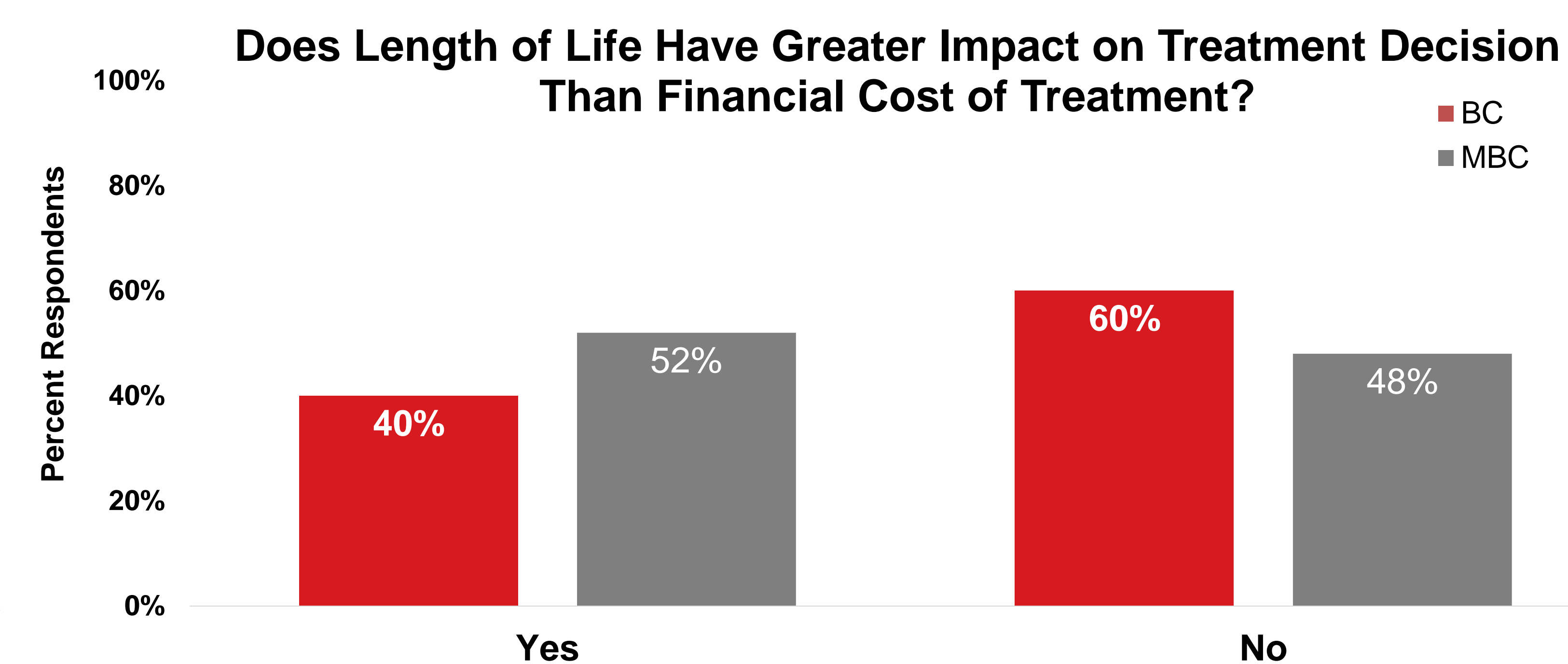
### Ranking the Importance of Factors In Making Treatment Decisions

	Average Rank	SD
Quality of Life	1.6	0.9
Length of Life	2.1	1.0
Impact on Family	2.3	1.0
Financial Cost of Care	3.1	1.2

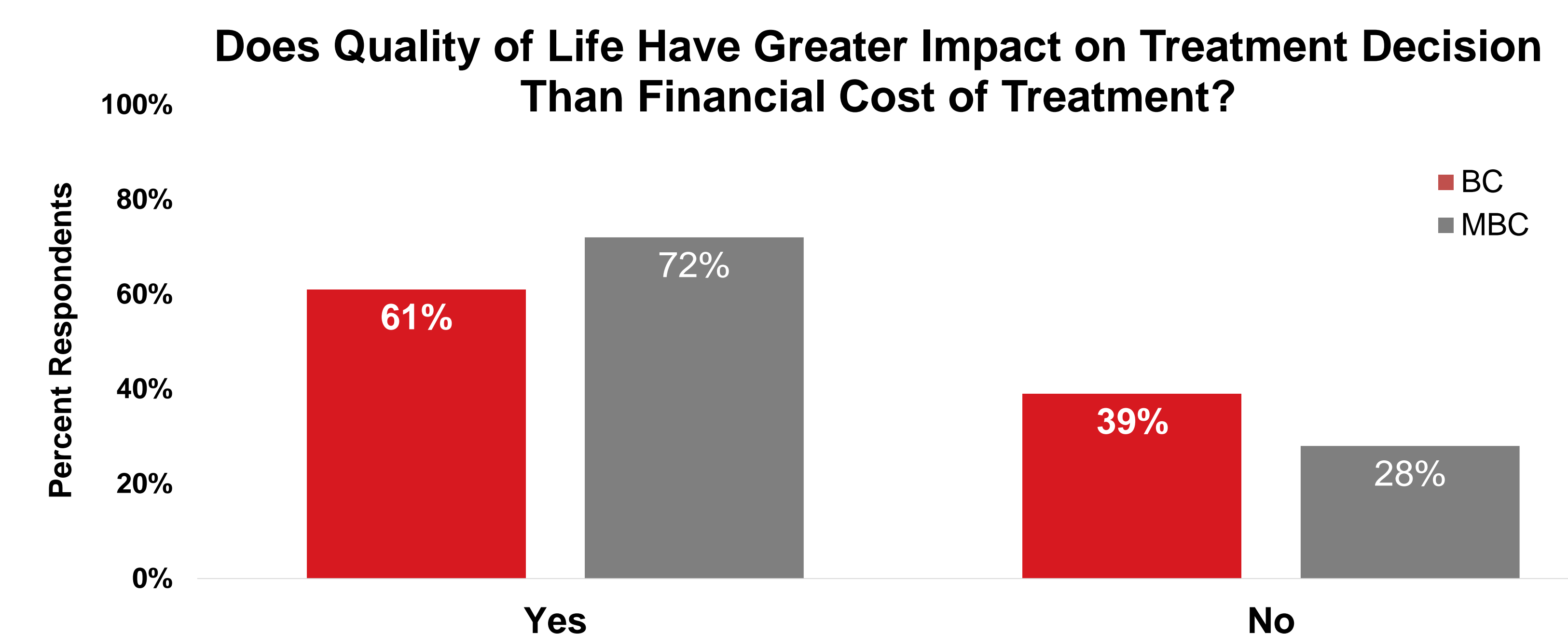
- For both BC and MBC patients, quality of life was most important for making breast cancer treatment decisions; financial cost of care tended to be ranked least important.

## IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

- Breast cancer patients prioritize quality of life when making treatment decisions, suggesting that clinicians should address quality of life preferences during cancer treatment conversations.
- Patients with metastatic disease placed an even greater emphasis on quality of life and length of life relative to cost of treatment. Given rising costs of care, health care teams are encouraged to discuss financial toxicity with patients, particularly as individuals with metastatic breast cancer are likely to be faced with long-term costs.
- Future research should explore how to develop, evaluate and implement evidence-based tools that enhance doctor-patient communication around quality of life and financial cost of care.



- 40% of BC patients indicated length of life impacted their treatment decision "much more" than cost of treatment vs. 52% among MBC ( $\chi^2 = 4.1, p < .05$ ).



- 61% of BC patients indicated quality of life impacted their treatment decision "much more" than cost of treatment vs. 72% among MBC ( $\chi^2 = 3.6, p = 0.058$ ; not significant).



A PROGRAM of the CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY

The Cancer Experience Registry is an online research initiative that captures the immediate and ongoing or changing social and emotional experiences of cancer survivors and their caregivers.

- The Registry is for all cancer survivors and caregivers, but also includes 11 disease-specific surveys.
- Findings contribute toward advancing research, health care and policy.
- Over 10,500 cancer survivors and caregivers are registered in the Cancer Experience Registry.

Learn more or join the Registry at [www.CancerExperienceRegistry.org](http://www.CancerExperienceRegistry.org)

### Acknowledgments

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### References

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