

Background

Immunotherapy has become an area rich with new discoveries and treatments with potential for success for many cancer types, yet patients potentially eligible for immunotherapy are often not aware of options. The past several years in particular have been a period of significant gains in knowledge and available treatment options in this area.

As cancer treatment becomes more personalized and the use of immunotherapy expands, it's important that patients and caregivers have access to educational tools to make informed decisions, reduce cancer-related distress, and get optimal benefit across the continuum of care.

This analysis explores participants' experiences with the Cancer Support Community's national evidence-based educational program, *Frankly Speaking about Cancer: Immunotherapy*. This comprehensive psychosocial program was created for people diagnosed with cancer and their families to provide information about immunotherapy as a treatment option, including how immunotherapy works, how to cope with the delayed response to treatment that is characteristic of some immunotherapy drugs, and the different side effects that people encounter while taking these treatments.

Objectives

- To assess the educational and empowerment outcomes of a psychoeducational workshop focused on immunotherapy for those affected by cancer.
- To better understand decision-making behaviors, patient-provider communication patterns, and self-reported outcomes from those attending a psychoeducational immunotherapy program.

Frankly Speaking About Cancer Program

- The *Frankly Speaking About Cancer* (FSAC) series provides in-depth coverage of topics relevant to those affected by cancer that are often not otherwise available in a comprehensive format.
- Topics covered include: lung cancer, clinical trials, cancer treatments and side effects and coping with the cost of care.
- Frankly Speaking About Cancer* is delivered via the Internet, print materials, online radio series, and professionally-led workshops held nationwide.



- Frankly Speaking About Cancer: Your Immune System & Cancer Treatment* is the newest program in the FSAC Series.
- Premise: Understanding how the immune system works opens the doors to new treatments that are changing the way we think about and treat cancer
- Program goals: To educate and to empower patients and caregivers on the topic of immunotherapy

Methods

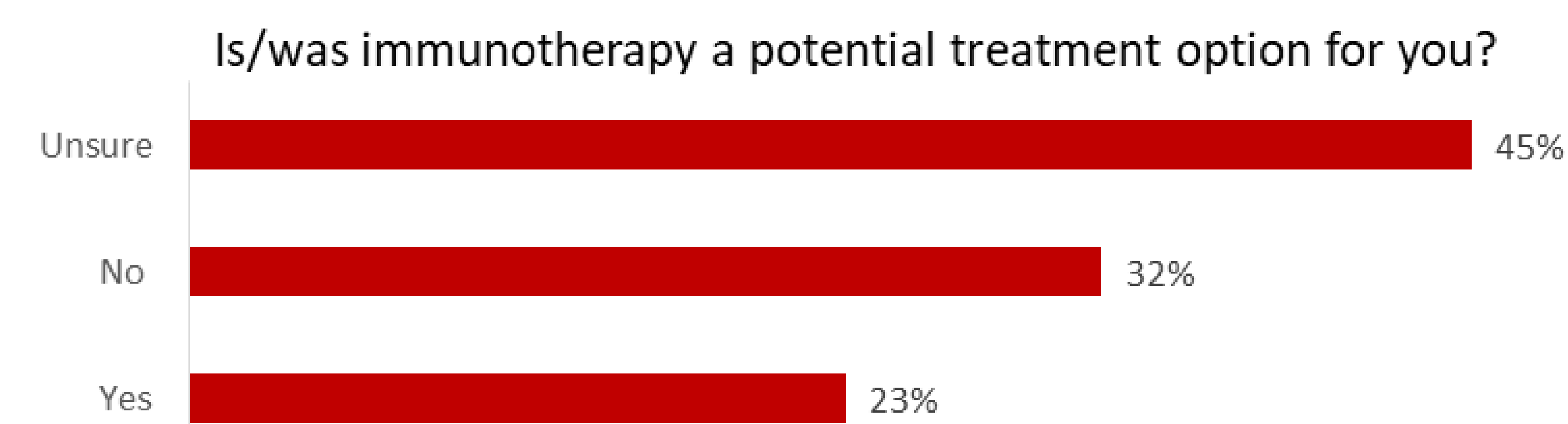
- Between 2014-2017, 593 cancer patients and 213 caregivers attending in-person *Frankly Speaking about Cancer: Immunotherapy* workshops across the country from completed a post-workshop evaluation.
- Participants came from CSC's nationwide affiliate network and were given the opportunity to complete a workshop evaluation at the end of the 2-hour program (85% response rate).
- The evaluation assessed knowledge (1 = not at all; 5 = very much) and program outcomes, including workshop satisfaction, in addition to demographics. Survey questions also focused on how cancer patients and their caregivers met their informational and assistance needs in regard to immunotherapy.
- Descriptive analyses and ANOVAs were used to assess participant characteristics, participant experience with immunotherapy and workshop outcomes.

Results

Respondent Characteristics

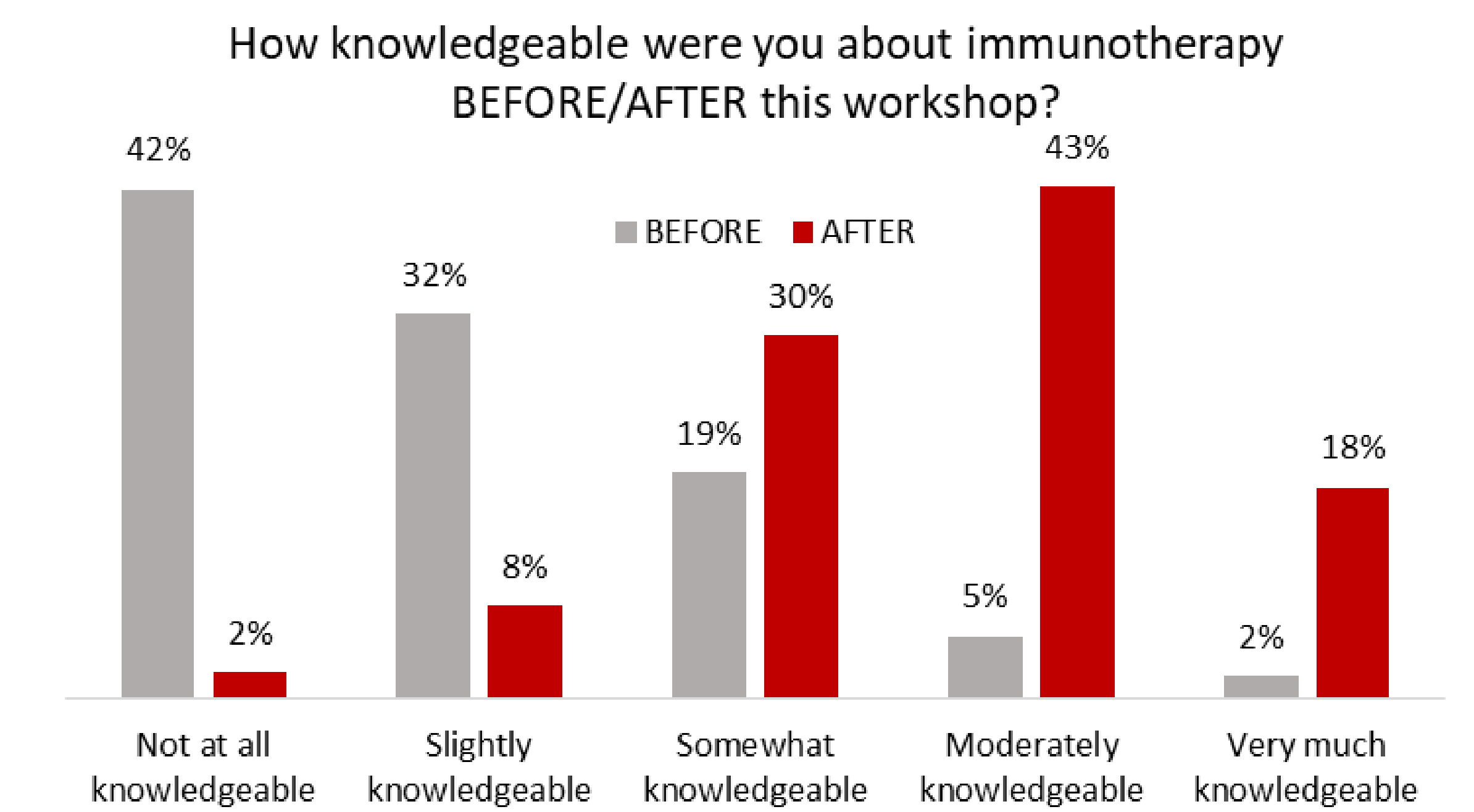
- Background Characteristics:**
 - Average Age: 62 years (s.d.=11.4 years)
 - Sex: 72% female
 - Racial Identification: 78% Caucasian, 10% African-American, 7% Asian, 5% Hispanic
- Type of workshop attendees:**
 - 73% cancer patient or survivor
 - 21.8% partner/family caregiver
 - 5.2% friend
- Cancer History:**
 - 39% had breast cancer
 - 33% had metastatic/advanced disease
 - 52% of were in active treatment for cancer at the time of the workshop
- Time since diagnosis:**
 - 48% received cancer diagnosis within past two years
 - 52% received cancer diagnosis more than 2 years ago

Immunotherapy as a Treatment Option



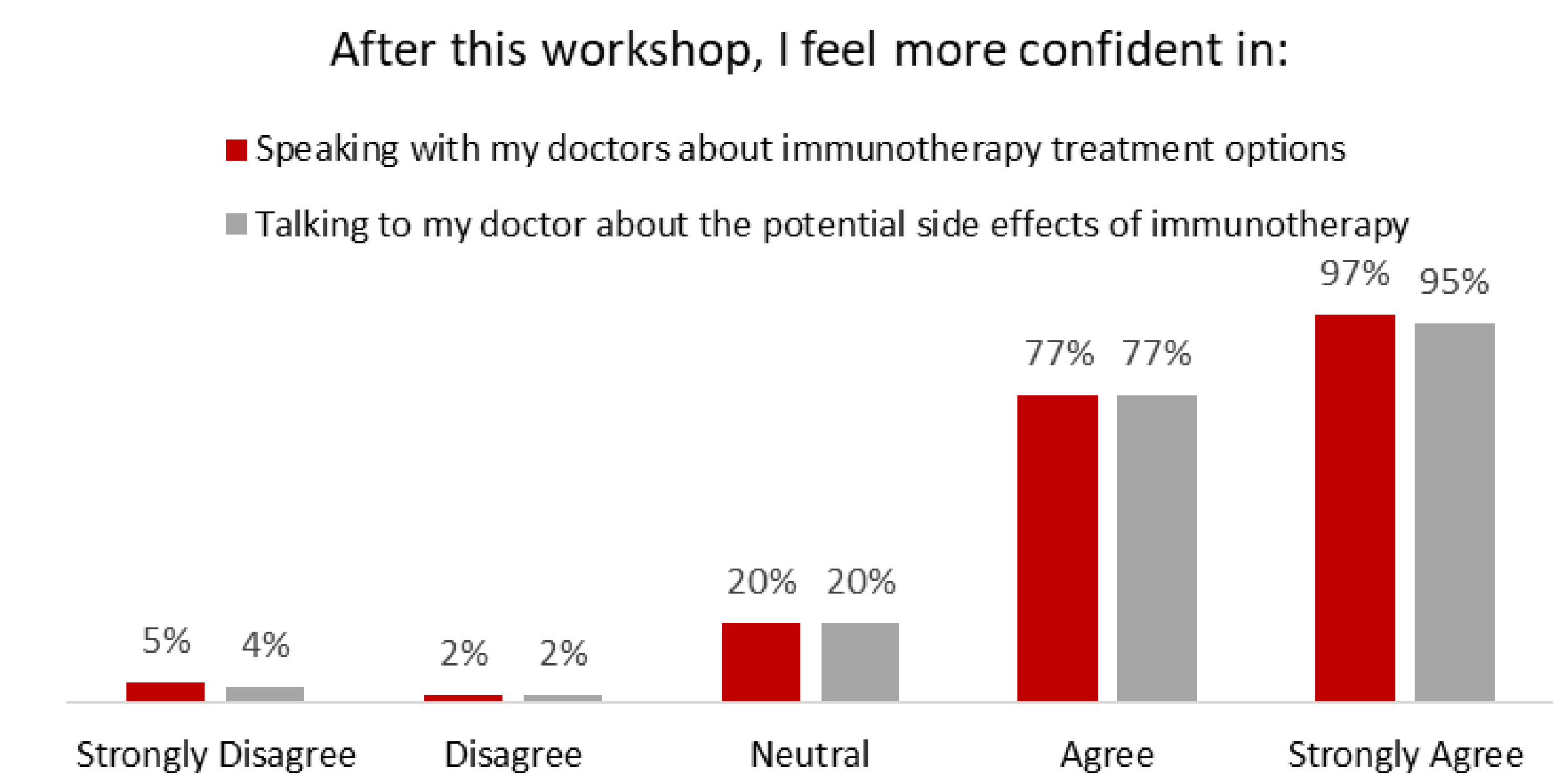
- 23% cancer patients/survivors reported that immunotherapy was a treatment option for them and 10% reported having undergone or undergoing immunotherapy.
- While over half of workshop attendees with cancer (55%) reported generally being very involved in their overall treatment decision-making, 45% were unsure whether immunotherapy had been a treatment option for them.

Immunotherapy Knowledge Pre-Post Workshop



- Before the workshop, 74% of attendees reported low immunotherapy knowledge ("1" or "2" on 5-point scale).
- After the workshop, 61% of attendees with cancer reported high knowledge of immunotherapy ("4" or "5" on 5-point scale).
- Comparing retrospective pre-post workshop self-assessment means, participating in the workshops was associated with positive gains in knowledge about immunotherapy (F=265.8, p<.05).

Gains in confidence from Attending Workshop



- 97% of participants indicated that after the workshop they felt more confident to talk to their healthcare team about immunotherapy.
- 95% of participants reported that after the workshop they felt better prepared to ask questions about side effects of immunotherapy.

Implications and Conclusions

- Findings suggest that the program successfully improves self-rated knowledge about immunotherapy and boosts confidence in discussing this treatment modality and its side effects with healthcare providers.
- Results support the program goals of successfully improving access to comprehensive information about immunotherapy and promoting communication between the patient and the healthcare team about treatment options and decision-making.