

Supporting cancer treatment side effect management: Results from a national sample of cancer psychoeducation program attendees

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Background

- Individuals undergoing cancer treatment are often faced with overwhelming amounts of information, particularly when making challenging treatment decisions.
- Cancer Support Community (CSC) developed the *Frankly Speaking About Cancer (FSAC): Cancer Treatment and Side Effects* psychoeducational workshop to educate attendees about treatment side effects and ways in which they can work with their health care team to manage physical and emotional side effects.

Aims

- We investigated how the *FSAC: Cancer Treatment and Side Effects* psychoeducational program had met the program's informational and communication-focused goals and was received by attendees.
- We assessed program participants' overall treatment and side effect experience.

Methods

From 2009 to 2016, 2,357 workshop attendees from the nationwide CSC affiliate network completed post-workshop evaluations (75% response rate).

- All attendees of this workshop were given the opportunity to complete a workshop evaluation at the end of the 2-hour program. The evaluation assessed treatment options, treatments and side effects of treatment, involvement and confidence in making treatment decisions, knowledge and gains achieved from attending the workshop, as well as demographics and overall workshop satisfaction.
- Descriptive analyses were used to assess participant characteristics, patient experience, and program outcomes.

Frankly Speaking About Cancer (FSAC) Series

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. Programs represent the most up-to-date content, delivered via the Internet, print materials, online radio series, and professionally-led workshops held nationwide.

Programs include:

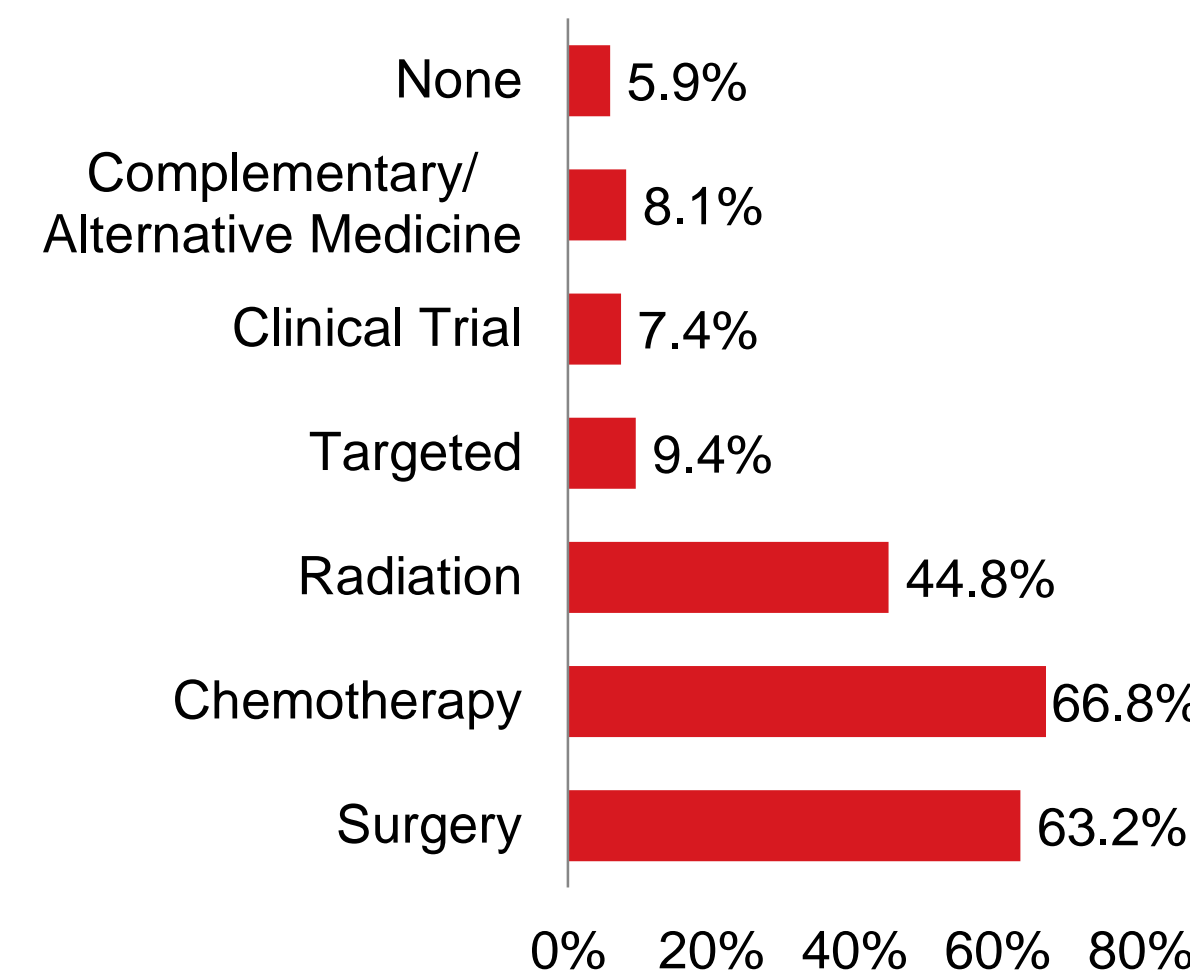
- Metastatic Breast Cancer
- Colorectal Cancer
- Breast Reconstruction
- Lung Cancer
- Liver Cancer
- Cancer Treatment & Side Effects
- New Discoveries
- Coping with the Cost of Care
- Melanoma
- Immunotherapy



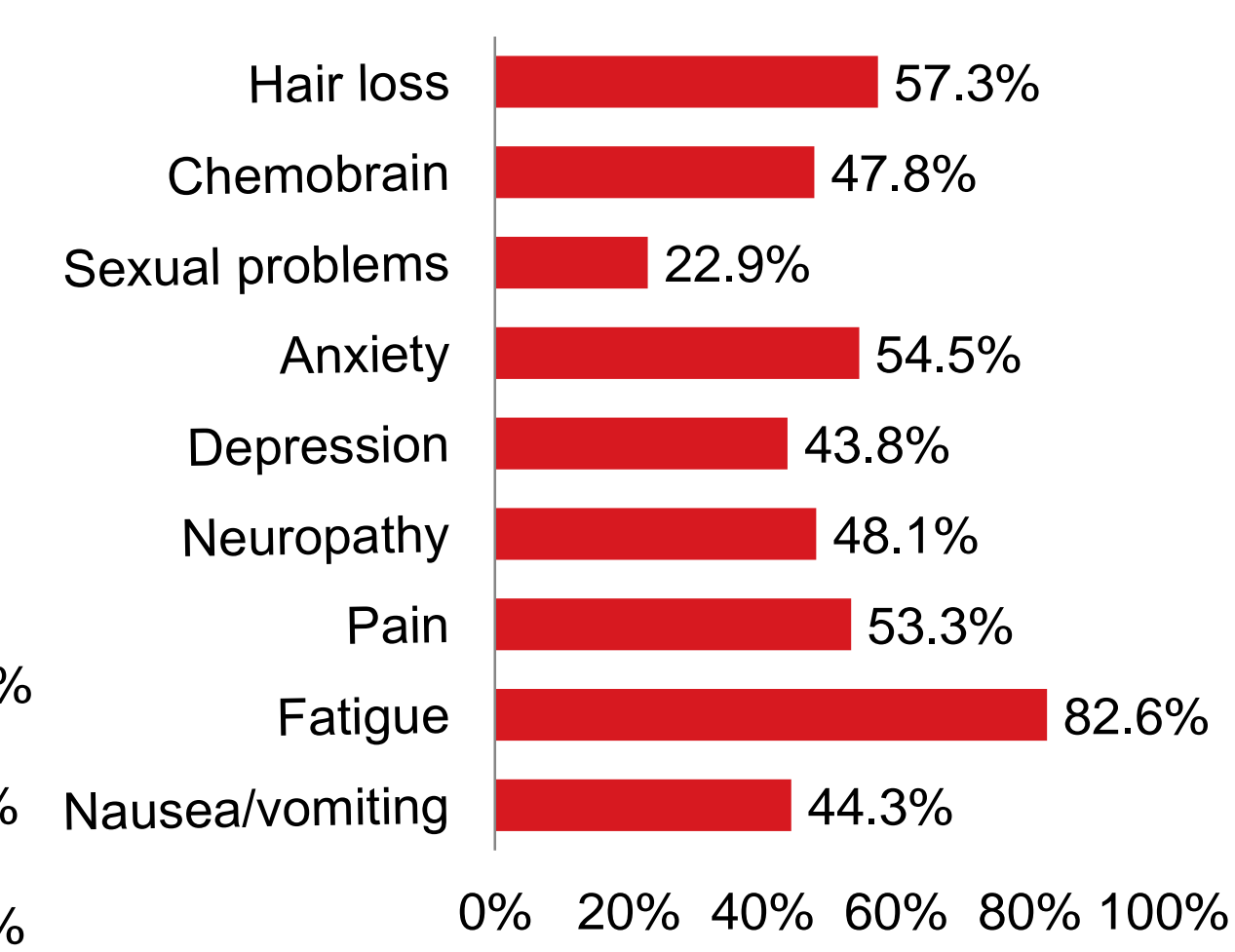
Results

Participant Characteristics	N = 2,357	%
Mean Age (SD)		58.9 (12.8)
Non-Hispanic White		76.7%
Female		78.3%
Education (at least college)		53.2%
Cancer experience		
Diagnosed with cancer		64.8%
Metastatic disease		29.7%
Diagnosed in the past year		39.7%
Type of cancer		
Breast Cancer		46.4%

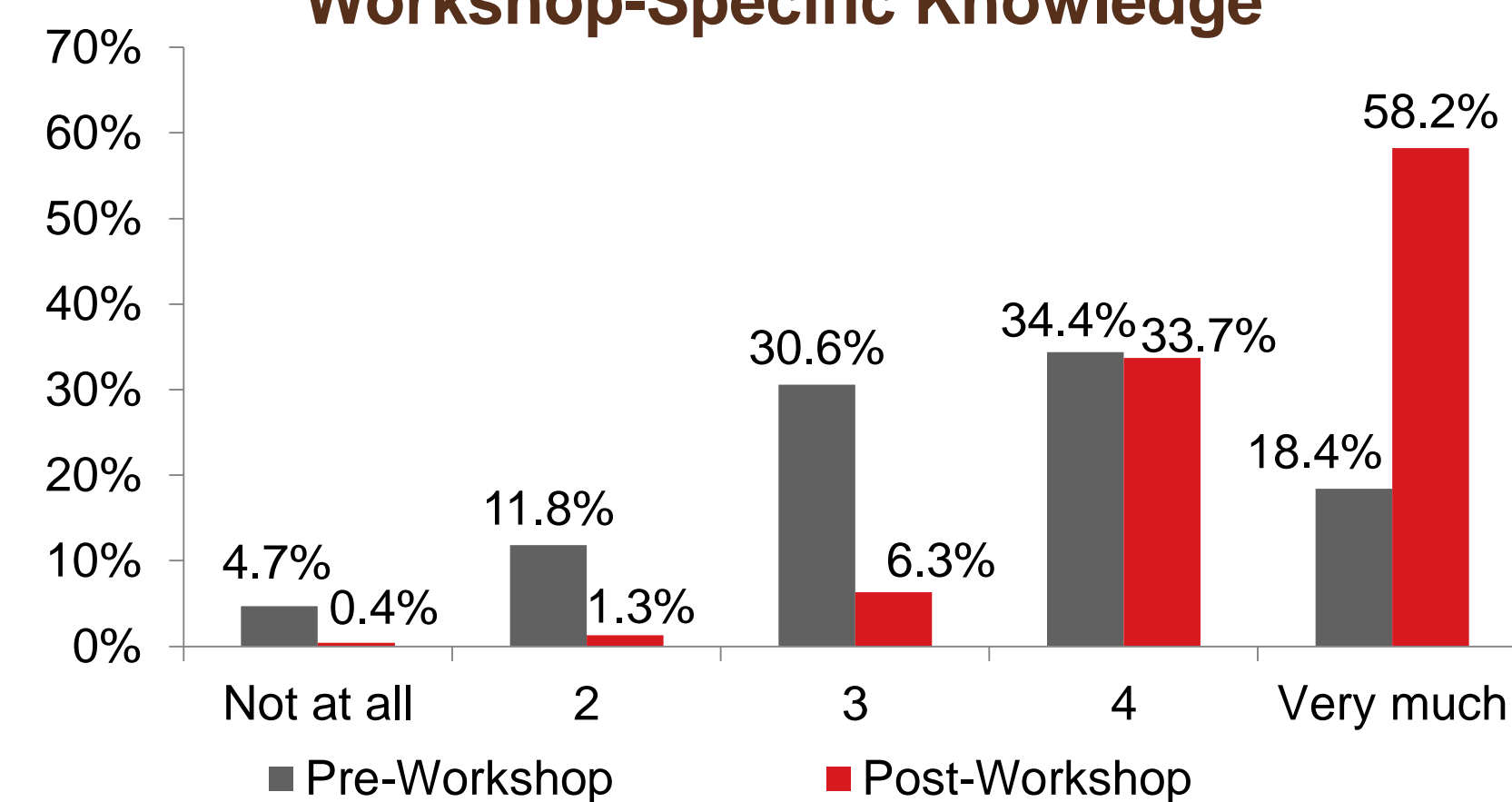
Types of Treatment



Side Effects Experienced

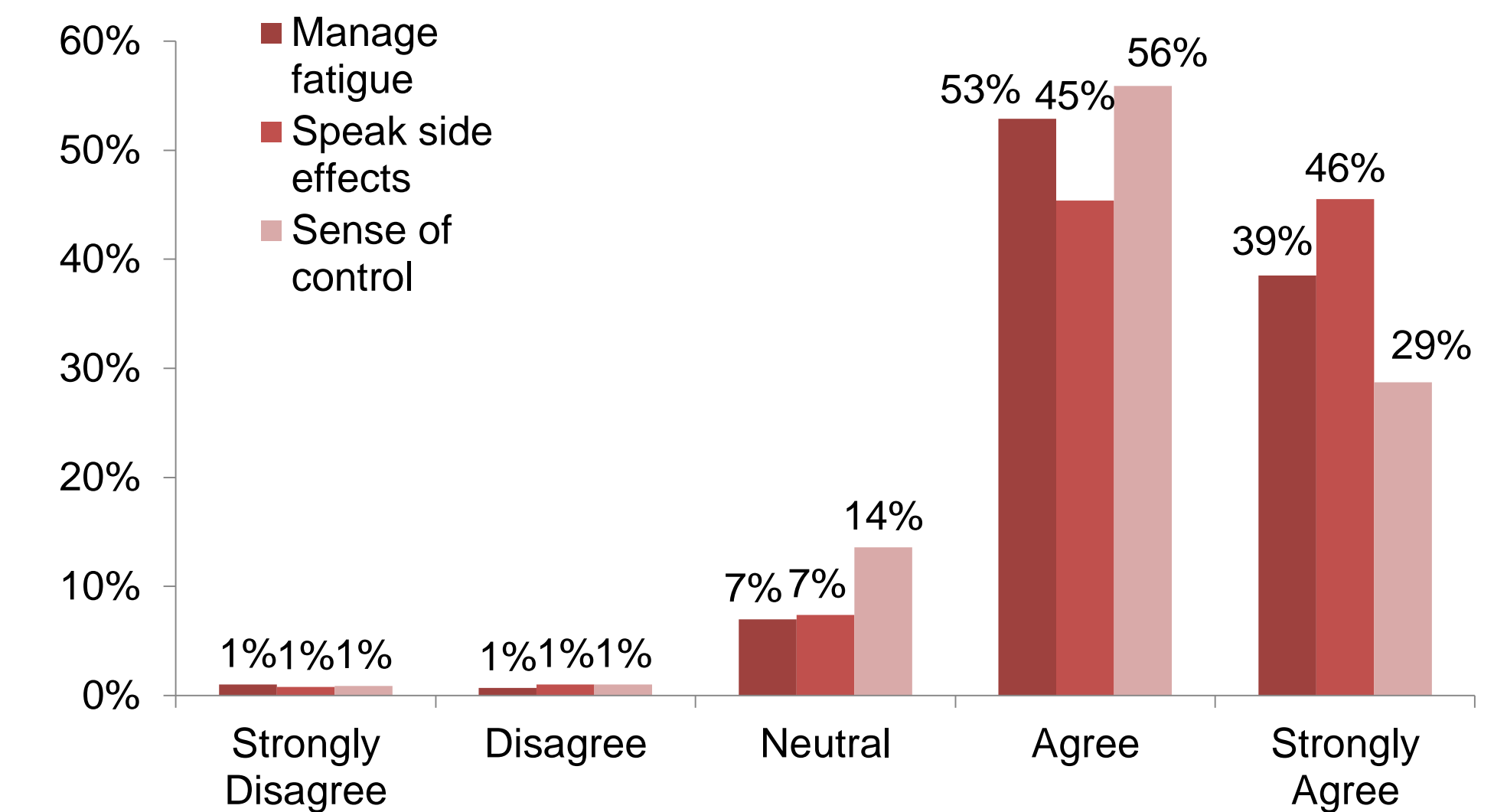


Workshop-Specific Knowledge



- Attendees reported a significant increase in content-specific knowledge after attending the workshop ($F = 128.7, p < .01$).
- For nearly half of attendees with cancer, (48.2%) this was the first psychoeducational workshop attended.

Coping with Treatment Side Effects



After attending the workshop:

- 91.2% of those diagnosed with cancer reported greater confidence in discussing questions about side effects of cancer and its treatment with their healthcare team.
- 91.4% understand the specific steps that can be taken to manage fatigue.
- 84.7% reported having a greater sense of control in managing side effects of their cancer treatment.

Treatment Decisions

- 42.4% of attendees received multiple treatment options.
- 24.9% reported no involvement in making treatment decisions.
- 56.6% reported a significant level of involvement in making treatment decisions.

Workshop Satisfaction

- 96.6% of attendees reported that they would recommend this workshop to others going through cancer treatment or struggling with treatment side effects.

Implications and Conclusions

- Given the prevalence and variety of experienced treatment side effects, addressing these needs can provide meaningful relief.
- Providing information in a comprehensive format in a face-to-face workshop is well-received by attendees.
- Results indicate that programs focused on treatment side effect management for cancer patients can educate and empower those affected, facilitating communication about treatment-related concerns.

Acknowledgments

This work is sponsored by Amgen.