

BACKGROUND

- **Financial toxicity (FT)** refers to the objective monetary burden and subjective psychological distress that cancer patients face as a result of their care.
- Myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS) are particularly costly, with patients facing an estimated burden of nearly \$130,000 in the first two years following diagnosis.

AIMS

To better understand the degree to which MDS patients report:

- 1) financial toxicity
- 2) finance-related worries and behaviors, and
- 3) cost-related medication scrimping

METHODS

- Observational, cross-sectional study
- From Oct 2021-Jun 2022, **112 participants with MDS** from the Cancer Support Community's Cancer Experience Registry® provided sociodemographic and clinical history information and completed:
 - Comprehensive Score for financial Toxicity (COST; scores range from 0 to 44, with lower indicating worse financial well-being)
 - Questions regarding finance-related worries, behaviors, and medication scrimping

PARTICIPANTS

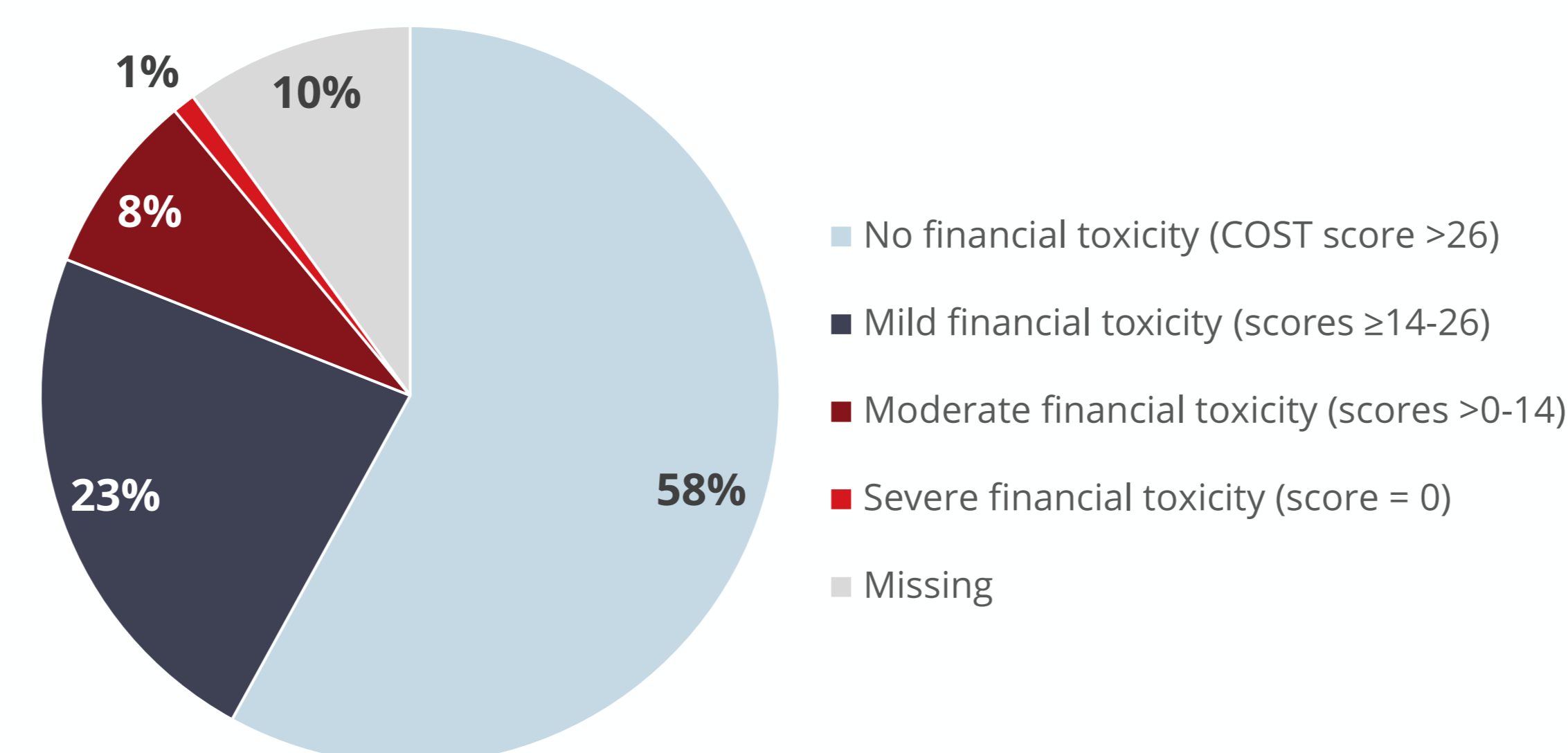
N = 112 individuals with MDS	Mean/n	SD/%
Age (years) (range 34-93)	M=69.8	SD=11.0
Race & Ethnicity		
Non-Hispanic White	99	88%
Non-Hispanic Asian/Asian American	3	3%
Non-Hispanic Black	1	1%
Non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native	1	1%
Hispanic	1	1%
Non-Hispanic other/Multiracial	4	4%
Gender Identity		
Woman	61	55%
Man	49	44%
Household Income <\$40,000	22	20%
Employment Status		
Employed Full-Time, Part-Time, or Temp.	13	12%
Retired	82	73%
Unemployed due to disability or other reason	14	13%
Years Since Diagnosis (range 0-24)	M=3.8	SD=5.2
Currently in Treatment	60	54%
History of Transplant	25	22%
WHO Subtype		
MDS-EB	19	17%
MDS-MLD	18	16%
MDS-RS	13	12%
MDS with isolated del	12	11%
MDS-SLD	6	5%
MDS-U	5	5%

9 (8%) participants reported an **IPSS-R score** of very low risk, 50 (45%) low risk, 19 (17%) intermediate risk, 6 (5%) high risk, and 5 (5%) very high risk, and 19% did not know.

Note: Data for "I don't know" and "Prefer not to share" response options omitted from table

RESULTS

Level of Financial Toxicity



The mean COST score was 28.9 (SD=10.5)

32% of participants indicated at least mild levels of financial toxicity

9% reported moderate to severe toxicity

13% of participants indicated that they were **moderately to severely concerned** about health insurance or money worries.

Actions Taken to Manage Cost

- 31%** utilized co-pay cards (e.g., pharmacy cards)
- 22%** used retirement funds
- 19%** received cash gifts or gift cards from others
- 12%** borrowed money or went into debt
- 11%** used up or depleted savings
- 7%** sold or liquidated assets
- 1%** filed for bankruptcy

Medication Scrimping

6% of participants indicated that in the past 12 months, there were times when they needed some kind of prescription medication **but did not get it** because of the cost.

Of the 51 participants who took prescription medication for their cancer in the past 12 months, **10%** reported that **they skipped medication doses, took less medication, or delayed filling a prescription** to save money.

Comprehensive Score for Financial Toxicity (COST) Item Ratings



CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

- MDS patients report significant cost-related worries, frustrations, and fears related to treatment, with almost 1 in 10 noting moderate/severe financial toxicity.
- MDS patients engage in a variety of strategies to mitigate the financial burden of treatment, including tapping into personal assets and scrimping on prescription medication.
- Future research should examine how maladaptive coping strategies for dealing with financial toxicity (e.g., medication scrimping) impacts patient outcomes.
- MDS healthcare teams should consider engaging in timely conversations about the cost and value of MDS treatments, conducting periodic assessments of financial toxicity, and offering access to financial and work-related resources for patients who may be at risk for financial toxicity.

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