

Self-reported Out-of-pocket Expenses, Income Loss, and Unpaid Informal Care Incurred By Cancer Patients in Saudi Arabia

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Introduction

- Research exploring costs from the patient's perspective, i.e. expenses that patients pay for medical products or health care services not covered by their health care provide, is limited¹.
- Costs from patient perspective include:
 - Direct medical costs incurred from utilizing medical products and services;
 - Direct nonmedical costs incurred from utilizing nonmedical services as a result of illness or disease such as transportation and child care;
 - Indirect costs include income lost due to loss of employment or reduced hours of work.
- Health-care in Saudi Arabia is provided by the public sector through governmentally funded facilities and by the private sector through 'for profit' hospitals and clinics.
- The governmental health-care providers are 'free at the point of use,' and the government imposes no taxation to fund health-care.

References QR code



Objectives

To identify out-of-pocket expenses and income loss incurred by patients as a result of a cancer diagnosis. The extent of informal (unpaid) care was also explored. Medical costs covered by the government are outside the study scope.

Methodology

Study Design:

A self-administered questionnaire-based study.

Target Population:

Adult solid cancer patients on chemotherapy for at least 3 months.

Study setting:

Patients were recruited from the University Medical City I King Khalid University Hospital, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Study Instrument:

- The questionnaire was informed by literature review²⁻⁴, discussions with health professionals (n=3), and interviews with patients (n=8).
- Paper-based questionnaire comprised of open and closed questions.
- Clinical experts (n=5) and patients (n=5) assessed the questionnaire face validity.
- We piloted (n= 8) the questionnaire and minor formatting issues were noted.

Data collection:

- The study received ethical approval and patients provided signed informed consent.
- Pharm D students were available to explain the task and answer queries, if any.
- Data were collected from November 2018 to April 2019.

Data analysis:

- Data were entered and analysed in Microsoft Excel 2013.
- Costs were converted to the Euro (€) using the exchange rate of 1€ = 4.25 Saudi Riyals.

Results

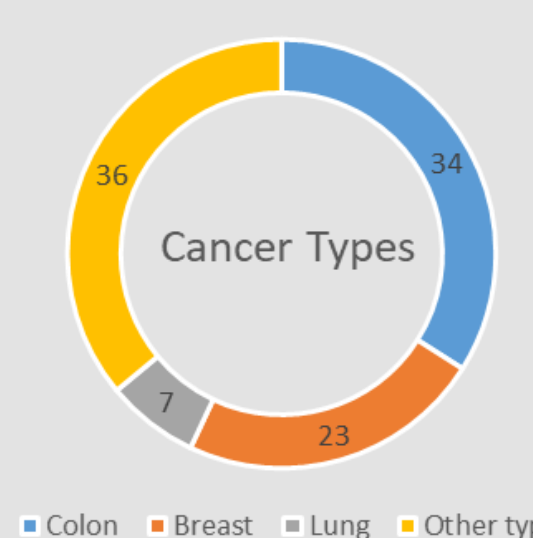
181 patients completed the questionnaire.



66% Female **80%** Married

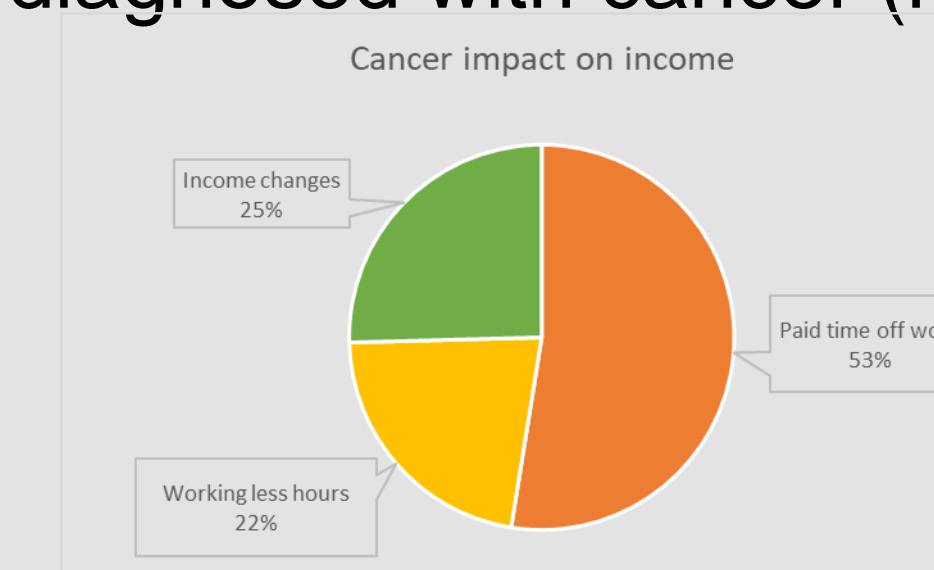
59% with at least high school education.

19.7(SD 21.9) months since diagnosis.



Income

74% of respondents not working. We asked the respondents who reported that they were working when diagnosed with cancer (n= **47**) if cancer impacted their work:



Daily activity Help

We asked the participants about the impact of cancer diagnosis on their need for help in activity of daily life.

- 64%** of respondents needed help in household chores, 31% childcare, 61% shopping, 43% medicine taking, and 28% personal care.
- The majority of respondents reported receiving help from a family member with activity of daily life.
- 32%** respondents reported that the family member had to take a leave from work to provide care.
- The family member spent on average **50** hours (median 24) a week providing care for cancer patient.

Medical

Over the last 4 weeks:

21% bought medications, **18%** visited a physician **8%** visited a physiotherapist spending a median cost of **€24**, **€118**, and **€235**, respectively.

Miscellaneous

- 41%** of the respondents are from outside Riyadh, half of them rent a house to stay during the chemotherapy session at the average costs of €74 (median 59) per day.
- 59%** of the respondents use their own car for transportation to and from the hospital to receive chemotherapy (median travel distance 42 Km).
- 9%** of respondents reported they bought a new house or make house adjustment (17%) as a result of cancer diagnosis. The average cost of house adjustment is € 1847 (median 529).
- 26%** of the respondents reported the need to buy an equipment to facilitate movement at the average cost of €264 (median 118).
- 70%** of the respondents reported buying more fruit and organic food since their diagnosis with an average cost of € 253 (median 118) weekly.

Conclusion

Implications for research and practice

- There financial burden cancer imposes on patients and their families need to be acknowledged.
- Support must be provided to ensure that transportation, child care, and other indirect expenses do not constitute barriers access to healthcare services.

Limitations

Our data come from a small sample of patients recruited from one study site therefore, generalization of the results is not possible.

Acknowledgements

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