

# Cancer survivors need better support to get jobs and access loans, say researchers

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More and more people are surviving cancer. Yet support for people who survive cancer and the research that underpins their care is insufficient, particularly when it comes to non-medical issues. A new special issue of the *Journal of Cancer Policy*, which will be published in March following the 3rd EORTC Cancer Survivorship Summit to be held in Brussels on March 1st and 2nd, shines a light on the issues and calls for more long-term research, better cross-analysis of different cancer types and better support for those who survive the disease.

One in three men and one in four women will develop cancer before the age of 75. Better prevention, screening and treatment for cancer mean an increasing number of those people will survive; globally there were 32 million cancer survivors in 2012 alone, and they will make up a significant proportion of the population in the future.

However, we still understand too little about the socio-economic issues cancer survivors are facing, like getting loans and accessing work. The new special issue is the first time that a journal highlights the need to shift from thinking about medical issues alone, to these important societal challenges, and follows on from the 3rd EORTC Cancer Survivorship Summit. Many of the authors of the special issue are speakers at the Summit where they will outline their vision for caring for survivors of cancer.

"Surviving cancer is more than a medical issue. We hope the research in this issue will increase the awareness of the socio-economic challenges

faced by survivors for both researchers and society, which would help to engage various stakeholders to join forces in research, deliver the best care for survivors and change practice," said Dr. Lifang Liu, one of the guest editors of the special issue.

When someone survives cancer, they may have continuing medical issues to think about, with regular checkups and tests following remission. But this isn't all they have to worry about - it could be the difficulties they often have accessing work, getting loans, mortgages and insurance, and returning to a healthy sex life that cause them the most problems.

Obtaining insurance is an example of the socio-economic challenges cancer survivors face. One of the papers in the issue<sup>1</sup> provides a practical solution to protect cancer survivors from discrimination when applying for insurance. The right to be forgotten, a French case study, is a potential starting point for a national or pan-European solution to this problem.

Another paper in the issue describes the YOU infrastructure: one of the four infrastructures that EORTC invested in to optimize and streamline modern clinical research. It is an innovative endeavor that aims to close the gap between clinical research and long-term follow up, ultimately to improve the lives of cancer patients.

"Current research efforts are fragmented," said Prof. Françoise Meunier, one of the guest editors of the issue. "There is an urgent need to change our mentality towards [cancer](#) survivorship and to form a comprehensive view on long term follow-up involving medical, physical, and psychological perspectives but also societal and financial ones. To move from optimized research to better care, implementation is key: we need to involve many different stakeholders early - not only researchers, but also lawyers, insurers and policy makers."

**More information:** Marie Mesnil, What do we mean by the right to be forgotten? An analysis of the French case study from a lawyer's perspective, *Journal of Cancer Policy* (2018). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jcpo.2018.01.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcpo.2018.01.001)

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