

# Mental health issues and changes to energy levels top concerns among cancer patients

29 August 2018



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Cancer Research UK has released new YouGov data today which highlights the stark realities of cancer. The survey asked 1,015 UK adults that had ever been diagnosed with cancer at some point about the changes their body went through while undergoing treatment and how they coped with them.

The new data reveals that almost three in 10 (29 percent) [cancer patients](#) surveyed have experienced [mental health issues](#) such as anxiety and depression, whilst one in ten (11 percent) respondents have sought advice from a mental health professional.

Talia Mazzuchetto aged 19, who was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma in 2015, said: "I really struggled after my diagnosis with depression and was anxious about all the different medical treatments I would need to have. I have been seeing a counsellor to talk through these concerns and I have been lucky to have the support of a close family and friends."

The survey, commissioned by Cancer Research

UK to tie in with the launch of its Cancer Care product range, also reveals that the biggest change experienced when going through [cancer treatment](#) is changes in energy levels, with over half (57 percent) of cancer patients experiencing this effect.

Because of this, those who had experienced such changes needed to adapt their lifestyles with 53 percent of respondents needing extra time to do everyday tasks such as housework and 41 percent saying they needed to sleep more.

## Physical changes

The survey revealed 29 percent of respondents had experienced changes to their hair, which is one of the side effects most commonly associated with those going through cancer treatment. Other physical changes experienced were skin becoming drier and itchier with 27 percent of respondents citing this, and nails changing colour, becoming brittle and getting indentations in them, a symptom 18 percent of respondents reported experiencing.

Other changes that respondents experienced included changes to their toilet habits (37 percent), changes to their weight (37 percent) and to their sexual libido (35 percent).

## Relationships

When asked about personal relationships after being diagnosed with cancer, 48 percent said that their relationship with their loved ones was more positive, while 45 percent said there was no difference, and only 6 percent said their cancer diagnosis had a negative impact on their closest personal relationships.

When asked how their loved ones could best help someone who was undergoing cancer treatment, 73 percent of respondents said simply spending time together would be the most helpful. Being accompanied by their loved ones to the hospital,

doctor, or to chemotherapy was also cited by 67 percent as being a good comfort.

### **Don't say it with flowers**

42 percent of cancer patients said that being bought gifts such as flowers or chocolate was not helpful. Instead the survey reveals that those going through cancer treatment would prefer to receive helpful items to help with the side effects of treatment such as moisturisers and lip balms with 86 percent of respondents citing that these would be helpful – things that they need and will actually use.

The survey also revealed that practical help with household chores, food shopping and meal preparation is helpful to those undergoing cancer treatment with 96 percent of respondents agreeing with this.

Julie Byard, head of trading at Cancer Research UK said: "It can be hard to know what to get somebody who is going through treatment, and that's why we created our new Cancer Care range of helpful items that could make all of the difference to someone undergoing cancer treatment.

"Whether you need a travel bag for a hospital visit, or sensitive shampoo, we hope our online site can become a one-stop shop to help people with the side effects of treatment."

As well as providing support for people going through treatment, all profits from the range go towards the charity's life-saving work into the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of all cancers.

Provided by Cancer Research UK

APA citation: Mental health issues and changes to energy levels top concerns among cancer patients (2018, August 29) retrieved 26 October 2020 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-08-mental-health-issues-energy-cancer.html>

*This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.*