

Barriers in the Path of Maintaining Well-being for Colorectal Cancer Patients and Caregivers

Kim Newcomer¹ & Marianne Pearson¹

¹Colorectal Cancer Alliance, 1025 Vermont Ave NW Suite 1066, Washington, DC 20005



Background

- Upon diagnosis, patients with colorectal cancer experience complex challenges and rely on direct support to alleviate their mental and emotional strain.
- Patients often require the assistance of a caregiver to handle daily activities, medical care, social needs, and navigate treatment options.
- These responsibilities may place caregivers at an increased risk of adverse psychological effects.
- Resources to support tasks as well as manage both patient and caregiver distress are essential for maintaining well-being during and after treatment.
- There is a clear need for support to alleviate high levels of patient and caregiver depression and anxiety, yet many lack access to quality, comprehensive resources
- The Colorectal Cancer Alliance is committed to developing a solution that meets both patient and caregiver needs.

Methods

- The Colorectal Cancer Alliance partnered with Phase2 Technology to create a survey aimed at understanding needs and solutions for colorectal cancer patients and caregivers.
- The survey was disseminated via email and the Blue Hope Nation Facebook community for two weeks.
- One hundred sixty-seven colorectal cancer patients of varying stages and diverse demographic backgrounds completed the survey.
- Forty caregivers of colorectal cancer patients completed the survey.

The Colorectal Cancer Alliance plans to create a *comprehensive patient and caregiver resource with tools to organize and effortlessly share vital information, test results, treatment plans, and other details.* Patient and caregiver-directed resources may enable a better care experience and potentially lead to better mental health outcomes for patients and their caregivers.



Results

- Both patients and caregivers indicated experiencing poor sleep, feelings of isolation, anxiety/stress, depression, fatigue, physical pain, and illness.
- Patients reported need for financial support, informational resources, peer connection, and survivorship support to alleviate the mental and emotional strain during and after treatment.
- To provide more efficient care and limit stress, caregivers suggested the need for a comprehensive resource with information on medications, side effects, and treatments; a guide for clinical decision making and discussions; archive for medical forms and a tool to connect with peer caregivers.

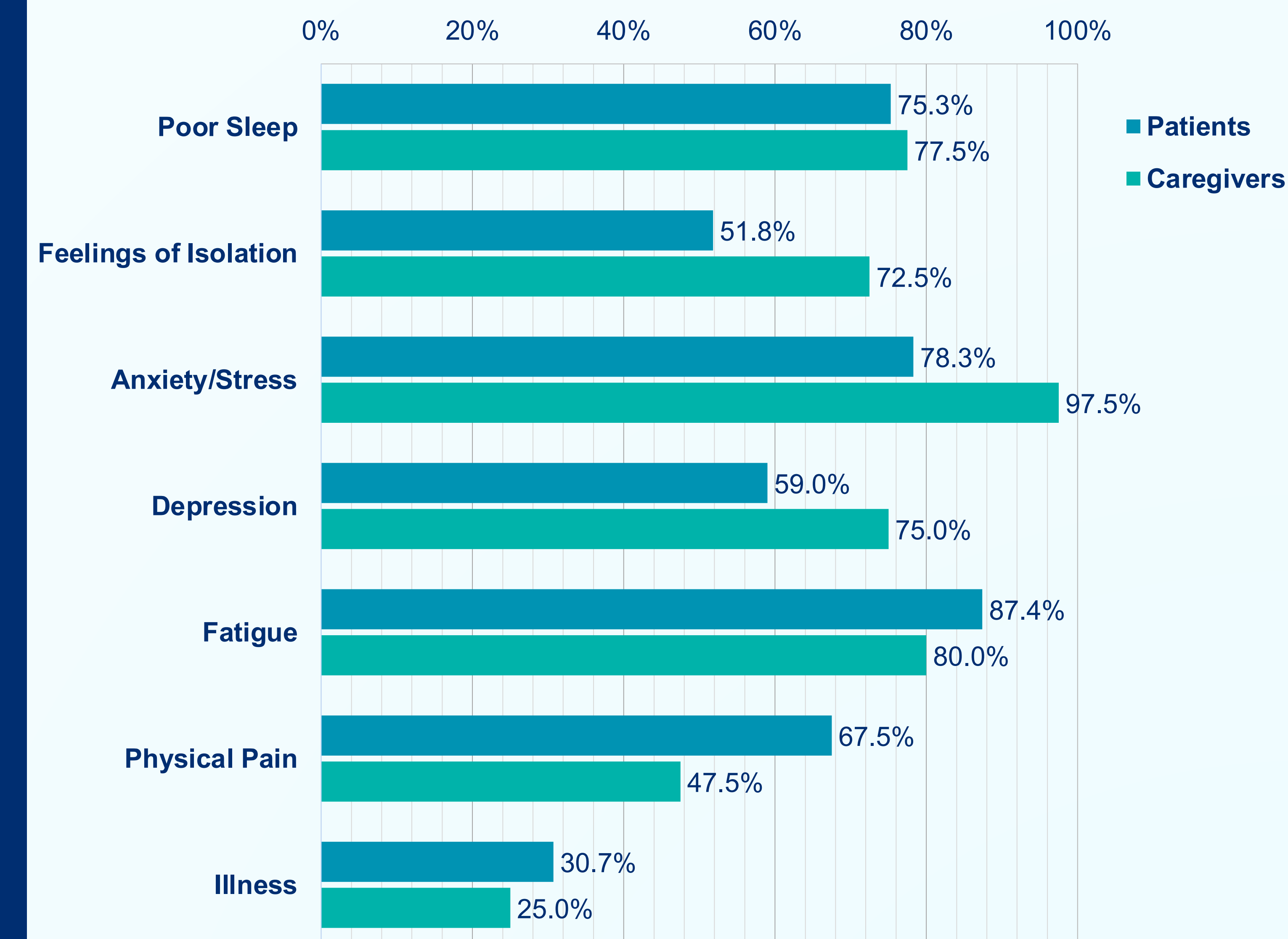


Figure 1. Symptoms experienced by colorectal cancer patients and caregivers

Acknowledgements

Phase2 transforms the patient experience from a series of disjointed interactions to a continuous, frictionless, and enriching healthcare journey.

