Comorbidities after cancer and their management.

Results of a national survey of breast cancer survivors.

Background

- Breast cancer survivors experience significant burden from non-cancer chronic conditions.
- Little is known about how these conditions impact wellbeing and how well they are managed.

Key components of chronic care management:

- Patient activation
- Service delivery
- Goal setting
- Problem solving
- Follow-up/coordination

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- ### Aims:
- to examine the burden of chronic disease, its impact, care received, and its alignment with the principles of chronic disease management.

Methods

- A 22-item study-specific online survey was developed and pilot tested. The survey included questions on:
- presence of chronic conditions using the Charlson Comorbidity Index,
 - functional status using Vulnerable Elders Survey, and
 - perceived quality of care for cancer and non-cancer conditions using the Patient Assessment of Care for Chronic Conditions Survey (PACIC).
- Members of Breast Cancer Network Australia were invited via email to complete the survey.

Results

Table 1 Demographics of participants (n=177)	
	n (%)
Age in years, n=123	60.3 (9.4)
Marital status, n=171	
Single	21 (12.28)
Married	116 (67.84)
Defacto	13 (7.6)
Divorced	13 (7.6)
Widowed	67 (4.1)
Prefer no to tell	1(0.58)
Employment status, n=171	
Unemployed	3 (1.75)
Employed	64 (37.43)
Retired	81 (47.37)
Home duties	11 (6.43)
Other	12 (7.01)
Income, n=171	
\$0-\$6,000	3 (1.75)
\$6,000-\$35,000	40 (23.39)
\$35,000-\$80,000	48 (28.07)
\$80,000-\$180,000	34 (19.88)
Over\$180,000	13 (7.6)
Prefer not to tell	33(19.3)
Living arrangement, n=170	
Other living arrangement	135 (79.41)
Living alone	33 (19.41)
Prefer not to tell	2(1.18)
Insurance, n=171	
No	34 (19.88)
Yes	137 (80.12)
Culture background, n=171	
Australian	155 (90.64)
Other	16(9.36)
Comorbidity rate , n=177	
Present	159 (90)
Perception of health, n=146	
Poor	8 (5.5)
Fair	33 (22.6)
Good	67 (45.9)
Very good	37 (25.3)
Excellent	1 (0.7)

Table 2. Prevalence of comorbidities.	
	n(%)
Had chronic conditions of any sort	157 (88.7)
Chronic conditions number (as per CCI)	
1	93 (52.5)
2	52 (29.4)
3	26 (14.7)
4	5 (2.8)
5	1 (0.6)
6	
Total chronic conditions number	
1	34 (19.3)
2	50 (28.4)
3	52 (29.6)
4 or more	40 (22.7)
Chronic conditions other than CCI	
Obesity	14 (7.9)
Lymphedema	19 (10.7)
Arthritis	25 (14.1)
Peripheral neuropathy	27 (15.2)
Osteoporosis	28 (15.8)
Pain	48 (27.1)

Figure 1 Overall PACIC scores and scores of five subscales for chronic disease and cancer care. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001, derived from paired sample t test.

- The survey was sent to 2,198 members of BCNA and 177 responses were received (8.1%).
- Majority considered their health good – very good.
- Majority (90%) had other comorbidities.
- Mean PACIC score and five subscale scores were average to low, but higher for chronic care compared to cancer care.
- Comorbidity correlated with perception of poor health.

Table 3. Correlation coefficients of association between comorbidity and perception of health.		
VES score	CCI score rho=0.23, p=0.007	CCI total number rho=0.37, p<0.001
Perceived health	rho=0.24, p=0.002	rho=0.29, p<0.001

Conclusions

- Comorbidities are common among breast cancer survivors.
- In this population of survivors with good health status and high rates of private insurance, the management of chronic conditions, and the management of breast cancer itself demonstrate limited alignment with established chronic disease management principles.

We acknowledge the assistance and support of the breast Cancer Network Australia in dissemination of the survey and its members for their willingness to respond to the survey and share their experiences of cancer and chronic disease.

INSPIRING
ACHIEVEMENT