

SURVEY: MOTIVATING AND HINDERING FACTORS FOR ADHERENCE TO MEDICAL TREATMENT IN FINLAND

INTRODUCTION

A cancer patient that is provided with sufficient information on why a particular medication is required and the expected outcome finds it easier to be motivated to adhere to medical treatments. Lack of information on side effects, changing doctors, and a feeling that healthcare or pharmacy professionals do not have complete understanding of treatments act as a hindrance to the commitment of medical treatments.

METHODOLOGY

Based on an **online survey conducted in November 2023 by the Association of Cancer Patients in Finland (458 respondents)**, three in four felt they had been heard in the healthcare services when a decision on medical treatment was reached. Over 50 % had used medicine(s) as part of their cancer treatment for at least a year. **Nearly 25 % had a chronic or metastatic cancer.**

Most respondents were breast cancer (52 %), gynecological cancer (9 %) and lung cancer (7 %) patients. **Rare solid tumors (sarcoma, GIST, NET)** constituted 4 % of responses (18 in total). 90 % of respondents were women and over 50 % of them had at least a Bachelor's degree.

RESULTS

- 96 % were committed to their medical treatment.
- Over 85 % understood why their medication was prescribed and what to expect from the treatment.
- **30 % did not receive enough information on the efficacy, safety and quality of the medicine.**
- **50 % received information on potential side effects in the pharmacy.**
- Over 90 % reported having experienced side effects from the medicine.
- For nearly 50 %, this resulted in a change of medicine or a smaller dosage.
- **One in ten reduced the dosage on their own or stopped taking the medicine altogether.**

CONCLUSION

Within health care services and pharmacies, it is crucial to consider the individual concerns or challenges patients might have regarding their medical treatment. Nobody should make adjustments or changes to their medical treatment on their own without discussing concerns or side effects with a healthcare professional.

REFERENCE & CONTACT INFORMATION

- Survey on Adherence to medical treatment (2023): www.syopapotilaat.fi (in Finnish)
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