

# Piloting a Nurse-Led Survivorship Model Across Metropolitan West Melbourne

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## Aim

This pilot, led by the Western and Central Melbourne Integrated Cancer Service (WCMICS), assesses the feasibility of implementing a nurse-led survivorship pathway for patients completing curative anti-cancer treatment. The model uses a standardised Survivorship Needs Assessment (SNA) tool inclusive of the distress thermometer, to inform tailored Survivorship Care Plans (SCPs).

## Background

Although in Australia cancer survivorship is rising due to improved detection and treatment, post-treatment care remains fragmented, especially between tertiary and primary care. SCPs, designed to support continuity, are underused, with only half of patients receiving comprehensive follow-up<sup>1</sup>. Oncology nurses can bridge this gap by integrating survivorship care into discharge planning. Through holistic assessment and coordination of physical, psychological, social, cultural, and practical needs, nurse-led models provide a safe, sustainable transition from hospital to community care.

## Methods

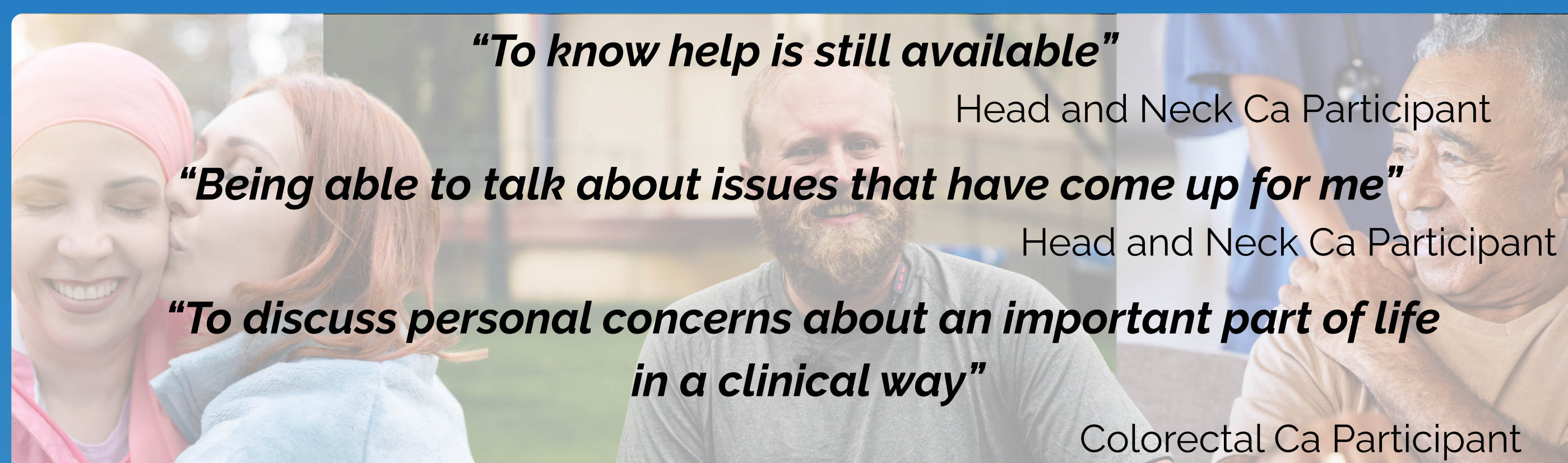
Three WCMICS member health services explored the integration of survivorship follow-up care into Symptom and Urgent Review Clinics (SURC). Each site recruited 10 patients who had completed curative treatment across various tumour streams. Each site received funding to backfill a nominated Oncology Nurse for one day per week for 8 months. Initiative 1 was mandatory, and Initiative 2 was optional.

### Initiative 1: Needs Assessment

- Evidence-based SNA tool addressing physical, social, spiritual, lifestyle and mental health domains
- Treatment summary shared with General Practitioner (GP) including follow up plan and surveillance schedule
- Information resources related to issues/concerns raised during assessment
- Patient experience feedback on survivorship care

### Initiative 2: Survivorship Care Plan

- Tailored SCP provided to the patient and GP



## Conclusion

A nurse-led survivorship model shows strong potential to improve patient experience, coordination and continuity of care. Findings will inform broader adoption across WCMICS region and support further evaluation of health and system outcomes.

Preliminary findings suggest the model is both feasible and acceptable:

- Nurse-led remote follow-up care enables personalised, clinically informed care.
- Established nurse-patient relationships support trust and participation.
- High patient satisfaction with telehealth indicates improved access and continuity.
- Pre-consult SNA completion enhanced the relevance of discussions.
- Digital literacy remains a barrier for some participants.
- Limited patient feedback may not fully reflect the broader experience, so findings should be interpreted with caution.

## Results

### Clinical findings:

- 34 patients participated across three west metropolitan health services.
- SNA completion was at 97% with 100% of SCP or treatment summaries sent.
- Key concerns raised by patients related to Oral and Sensory Function (n=27), Mental and Emotional Wellbeing (n=11), Pain and Physical Symptoms (n=26) and Supportive Care and Practical Needs (n=13) (Figure 2).
- 28 opportunities for follow up were identified including exercise rehabilitation or physiotherapy (n=11), specialist or GP follow up (n=12), mental health support/counselling (n=3) and financial support (n=2).
- 56% of consultations took place via telephone, with 41% in-person and 3% via telehealth.
- Average time taken to complete the SNA and SCP collectively was 79 minutes.

Figure 1. Tumour Stream Breakdown (%)

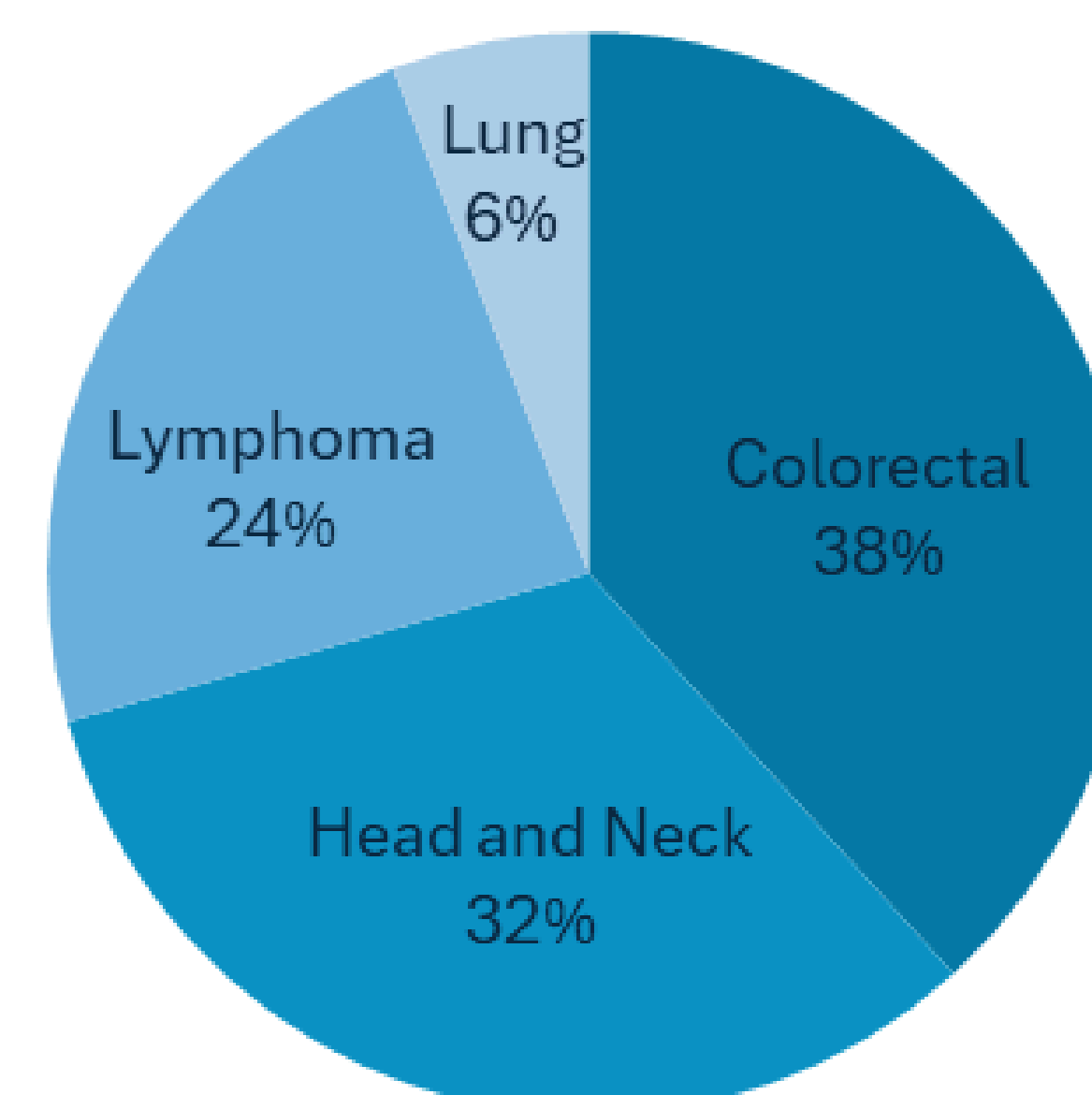
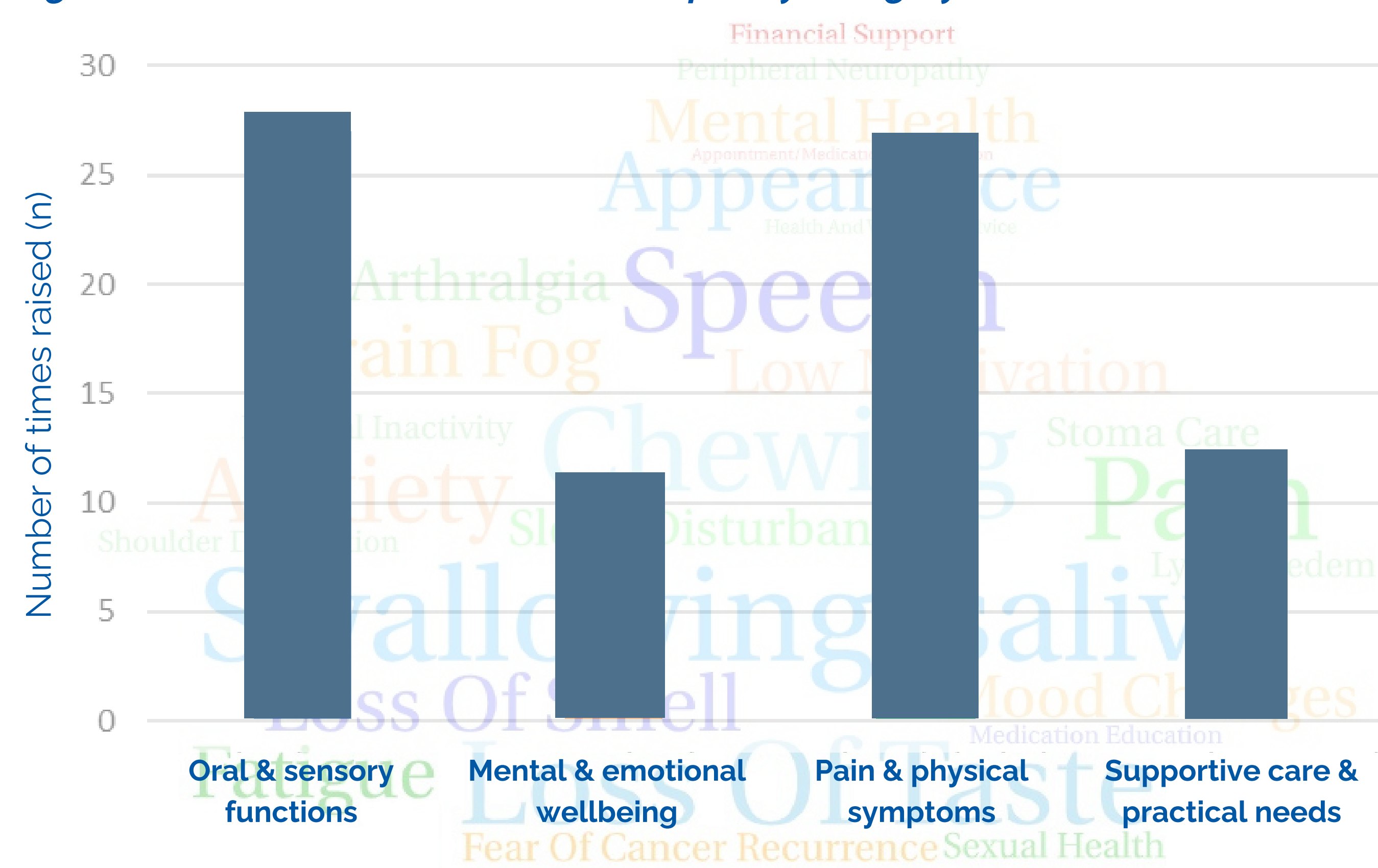


Figure 2. Health-Related Concerns Identified by Category



### Patient reported findings:

- Only 13 patients (38%) completed a patient feedback evaluation tool.
- 22% of respondents reported 'not knowing who to contact' when concerns related to their cancer arise prior to their consultation.
- 62% of respondents 'completely understood' what was discussed in their consultations.
- 62% of respondents indicated that the SNA made it 'somewhat easier' to access cancer care in their community.
- 55% of respondents felt that having a SCP would assist their transition into the community 'quite a bit' or 'very much'.

## Reference

Victorian Health Experience Survey (VHES) Cancer [Internet] (2022). Victorian Agency for Health Information. Available from: [https://results.vhes.com.au/peer\\_groups/83/summary/19](https://results.vhes.com.au/peer_groups/83/summary/19).

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