

Background

- Cancer can affect people of all ages and backgrounds.
- Younger and elderly cancer patients have unique needs.
- It is important to look into their needs and provide personalized care and takes into account their needs and concerns.

Aims

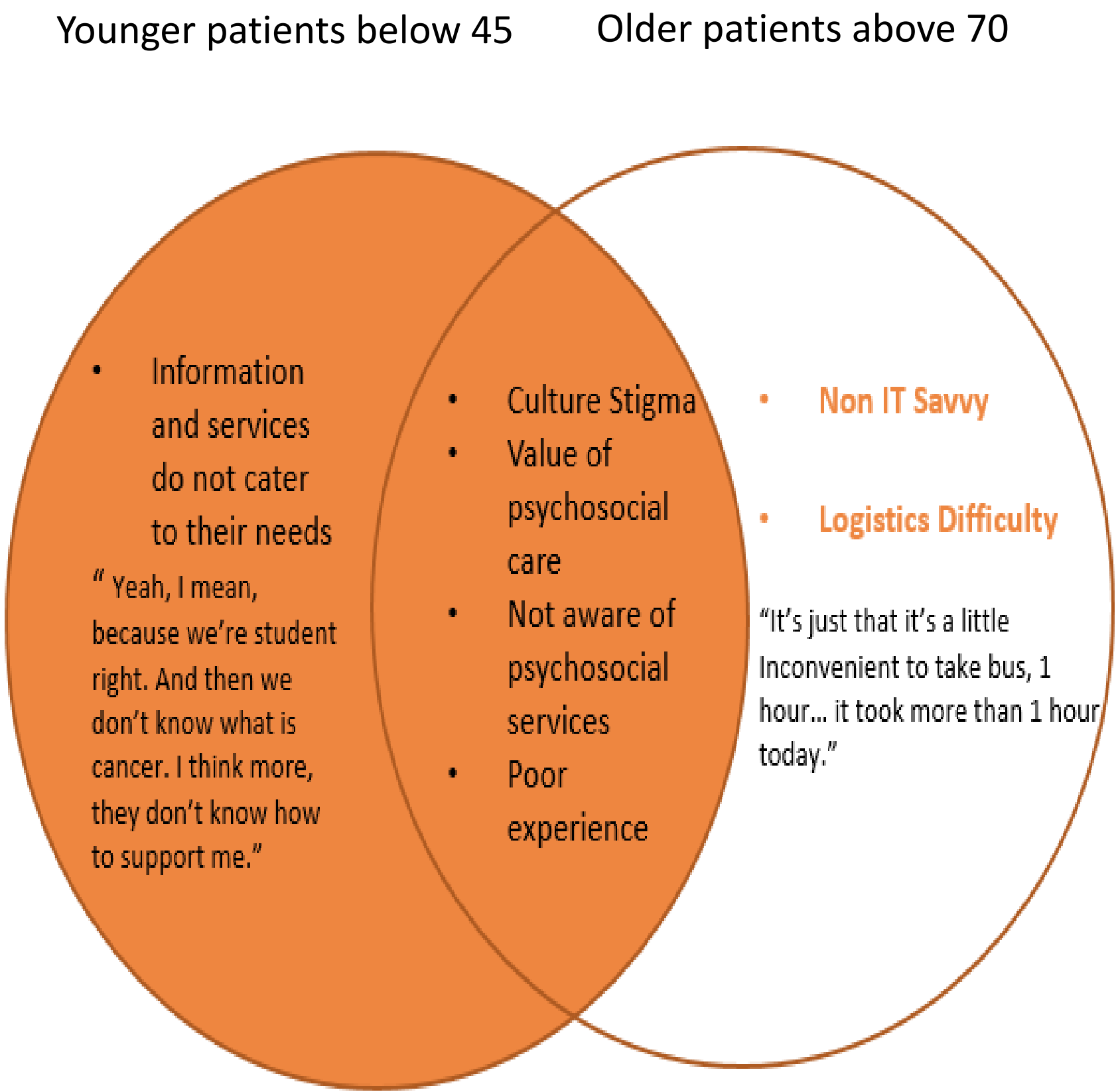
This study sought to understand the barriers and challenges of accessing psychosocial care in an oncology specialist centre in Singapore with a focus on two special groups: younger patients under 45 and elderly patients above 70.

Method

- Data were collected through Department of Psychosocial Oncology (DPO).
- Semi structure interviews were conducted either face to face or via Zoom.
- Purposive sampling was conducted to ensure the study sample had representation of demographic characteristics and treatment intent. See below:

	Patient / caregiver profiles					
Participant profile	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Medical treatment stage	Pre-diagnosis / Diagnosis		Treatment / End of Treatment		End of Life / Survivors / Recurrence	
Accepted/sought psychosocial care?	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Medical treatment intent	Palliative	Curative	Curative	Palliative	Curative	Long-term survivorship
Age & Living Situation	45 and below	70 and above (living alone)	70 and above	45 and below	45 and below	70 and above
Caregiver status	Present	Disengaged/ Absent	Present	Present	Disengaged/ Absent	Present

Results



Themes	Guided referral for psychosocial & spiritual care	Caregiver outreach (via doctor, not psychologist or MSW)	Buying time (for an important reason, e.g. child)	Better lifestyle habits (e.g. for better / more regular sleep)	MSWs (professionals) For difficult topics	Financial aid or guidance	Psychiatric help (depression)	Guided referral to support /peer group	Guided referral to support resources	Early examination	Respite support (non psychosocial needs)	Leverage P/C self-determination
P/C1-1												
P/C1-2												
P/C2-1												
P/C3-1												
P/C3-2												
P/C4-1												
P/C4-2												
P/C5-1												
P/C6-1												
P/C6-2												

5 key themes

Discussion

- Many of the themes that emerged were raised by both younger and older patients, although there were a few themes specific to the respective age groups.
- Our findings suggest that psychosocial care could be offered differently to patients in view of their life stage and ability to use digital services.