



SENSE OF CONTROL IS THE KEY FACTOR OF QUALITY OF LIFE ENHANCEMENTS AMONG CANCER POPULATION

Satoko Shimazu, Atsumi Araki, Shariann Tom, Mary Coughlin
Supra Mentor Inc. | The Cancer Journey Institute

Introduction

Travel is a significant factor in enhancing quality of life (QOL)¹. However, individuals affected by cancer often confront physical and psychological challenges that impede their ability to travel. Existing research² predominantly focuses on the practical aspects of travel, such as physical movement, planning, budgeting, and unmet needs, with limited exploration of the emotional underpinnings of the desire to travel among the cancer population. This research gap prompted our study's objective. Cancer Journey Coaching⁴, pioneered by the Cancer Journey Institute, uses an emotional, mental, and spiritual approach to assist individuals affected by cancer - including patients, survivors, and caregivers across all age groups and stages of disease - in discovering their inner wisdom and unique strengths and making choices based on what is in their locus of control. **This investigation centers on the potential of Cancer Journey Coaching to enhance QOL for individuals who may have limitations due to their cancer diagnosis and contribute to the development of patient-centered supportive care, particularly within regions such as Asia, where mental healthcare resources are often insufficient⁵.**

Methods

Participants were recruited through the "Brain Tumor Survivor Care Program 360°" that Supra Mentor Inc³ runs and the customer database from the Cancer Journey Institute. **A web-based questionnaire was used** to gather information from 6 cancer survivors (mean age = 51.5) which included self-reported information about cancer treatment, recurrence, current psychological concerns, personal values, and desire for travel. We also compared their travel experiences pre- and post-cancer diagnosis and the factors that contributed to changes in travel plans. Following this, we conducted **group interviews using a tool called "FORM and FUNCTION,"** developed by the Cancer Journey Institute. "FORM" refers to the physical manifestation of one's desire, while "FUNCTION" represents the experience/feeling related to it. The goal of this tool is to help the cancer patient realize that there are multiple ways to manifest one's desires and that the effects can be immediate.

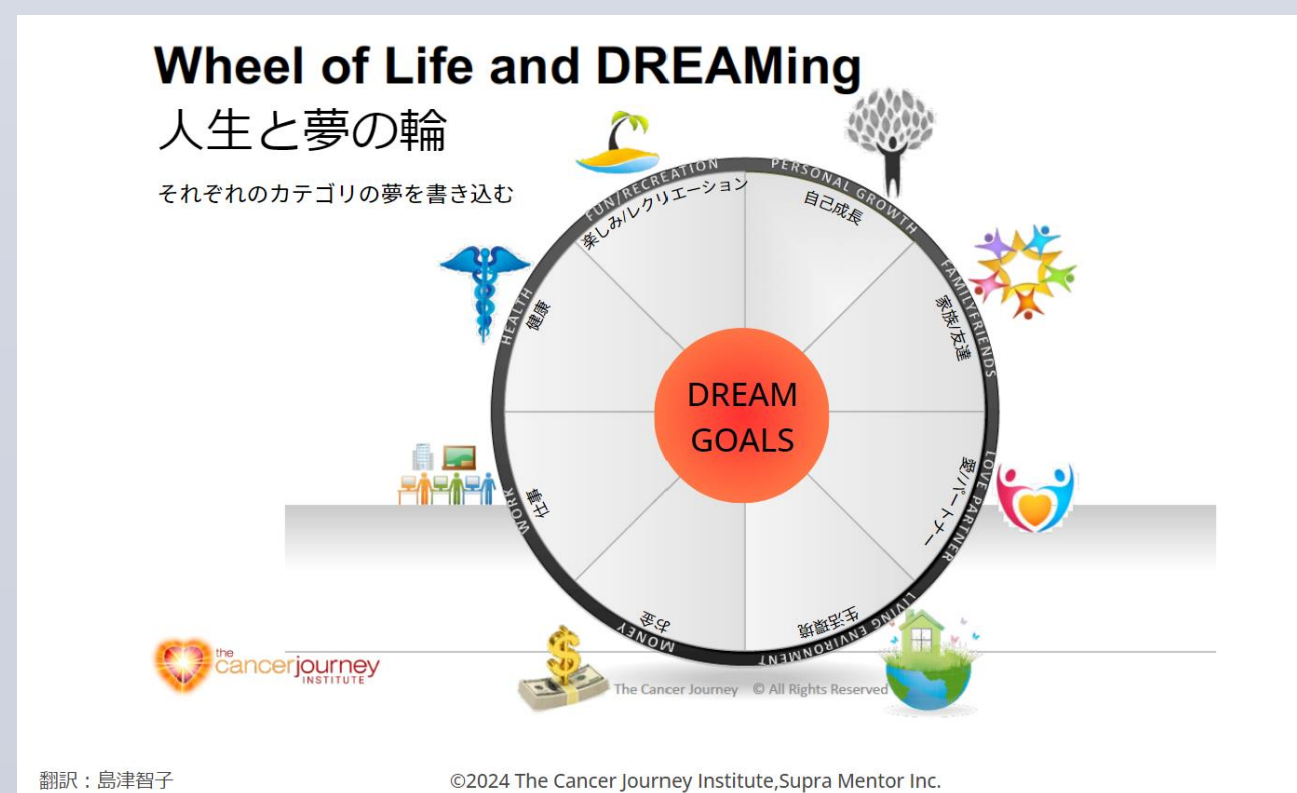


Figure 1. Cancer Journey Coaching tool :FORM and FUNCTION Wheel

Results

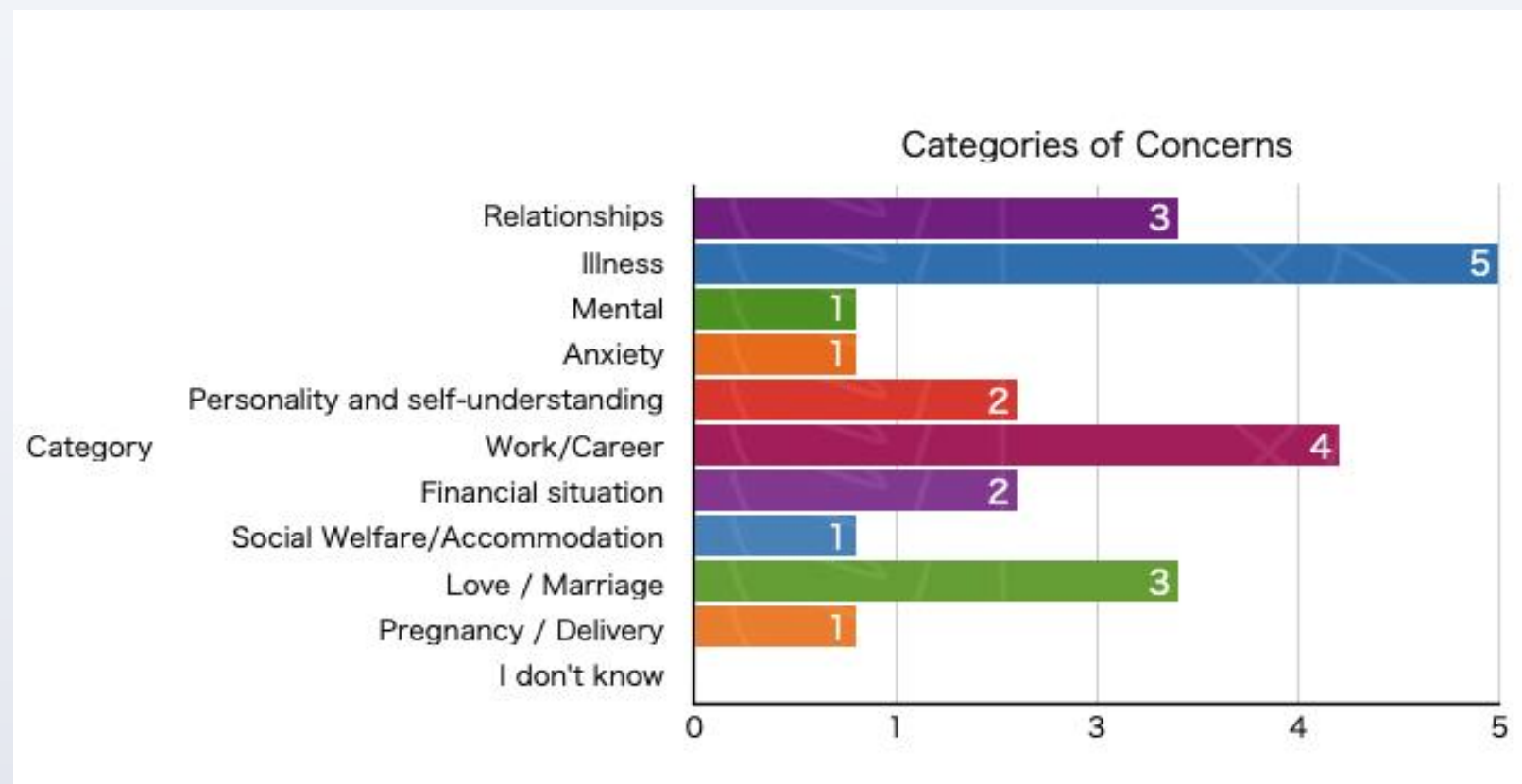


Figure 2. Checked categories of concerns in response to "Do you have concerns?"

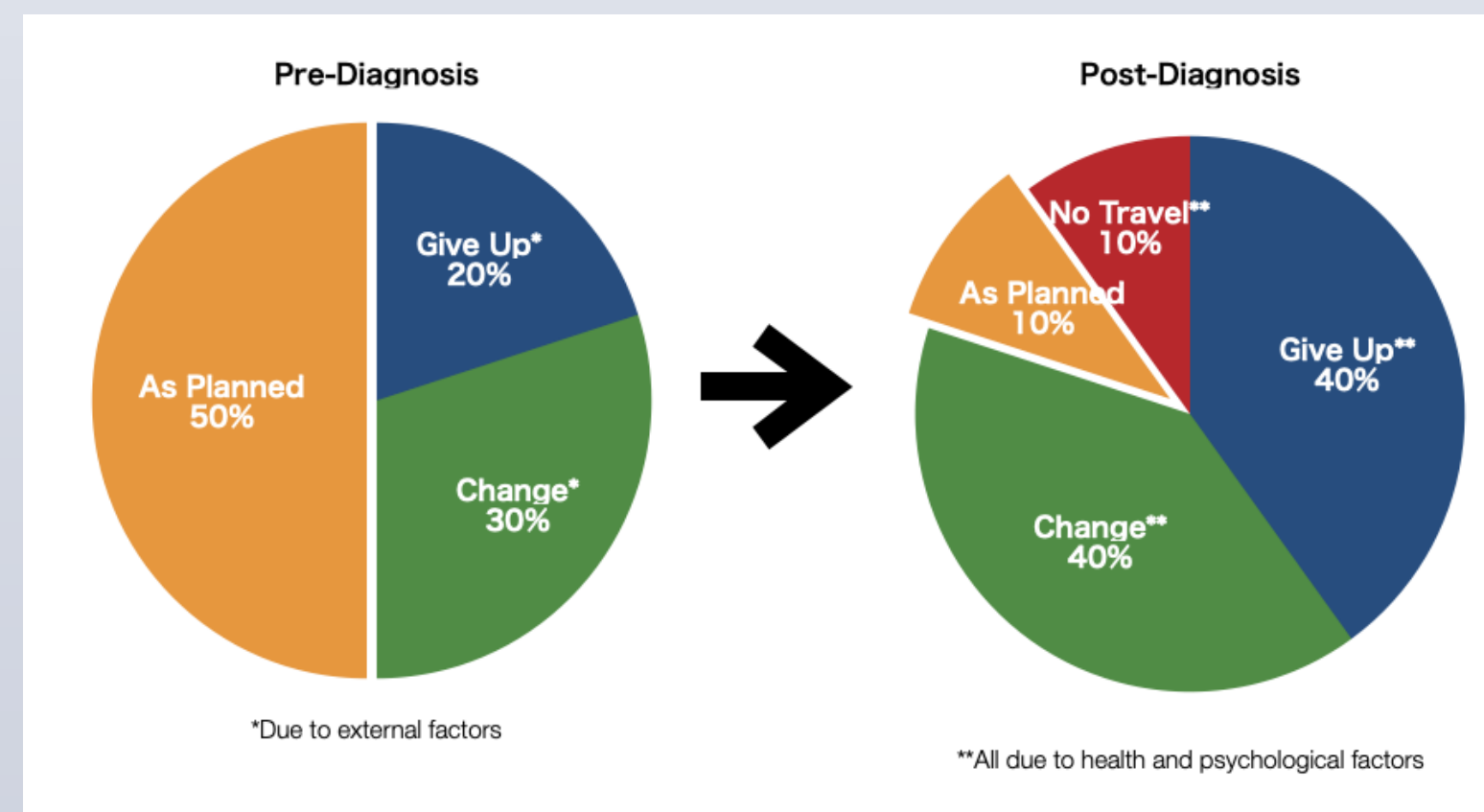


Figure 3. Comparison on travel experiences

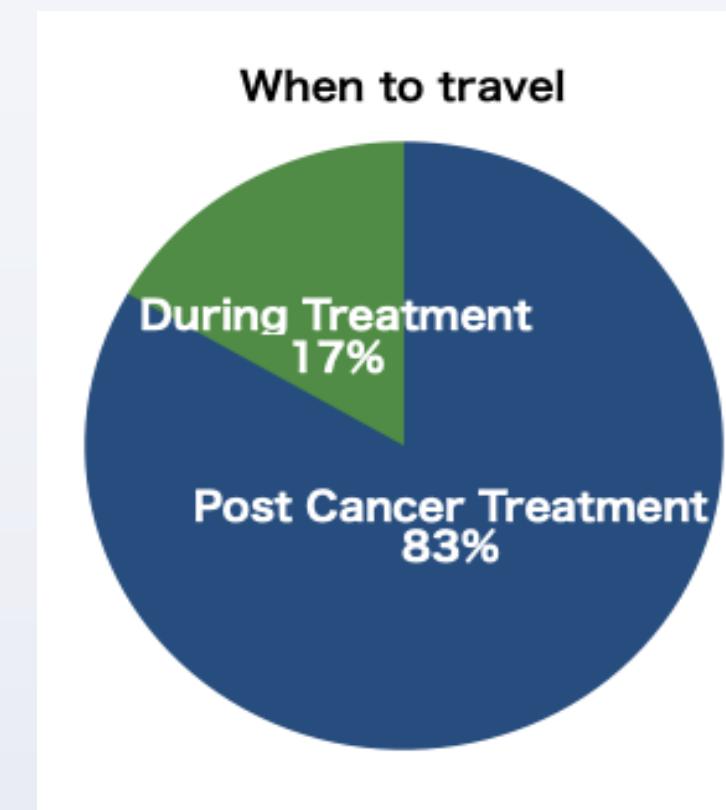


Figure 4. Period of actual travel after diagnosis

- 6 cancer patients from Japan and the U.S.; 4 brain tumor, one Metastatic Breast Cancer, and one Ovarian Cancer, two males and four females aged 37 to 70.
- 100% of the participants have concerns. The top three concerns are: **Illness (n=5), Work/Career (n=4), Relationship (n=3), and Love Marriage (n=3).**
- 4 out of 6 people indicated a desire for travel.
- After being diagnosed with cancer, **90% of travel plans were either changed, given up on, or never happened due to the lack of motivation to travel.** This was caused by physical and psychological challenges, including side effects, after-treatment effects, fear of getting sick (including COVID-19), and anxiety about maintaining the same level of self-care.
- Prior to diagnosis, reasons indicated for giving up or changing travel were due to external factors such as weather, political instability, illness of companion, budget, and schedule management.
- **100% of respondents chose not to travel abroad.**
- **83% of the respondents traveled post-treatment.**
- FUNCTIONS associated with desired travel included "Aliveness", "New discovery", "Personal growth", "New Perspective", "Health" and "Being moved".
- Alternate FORMS were identified and included "Crafting", "Putting feet on the beach with loved ones", "Going to nearby hot springs", and "Journaling".

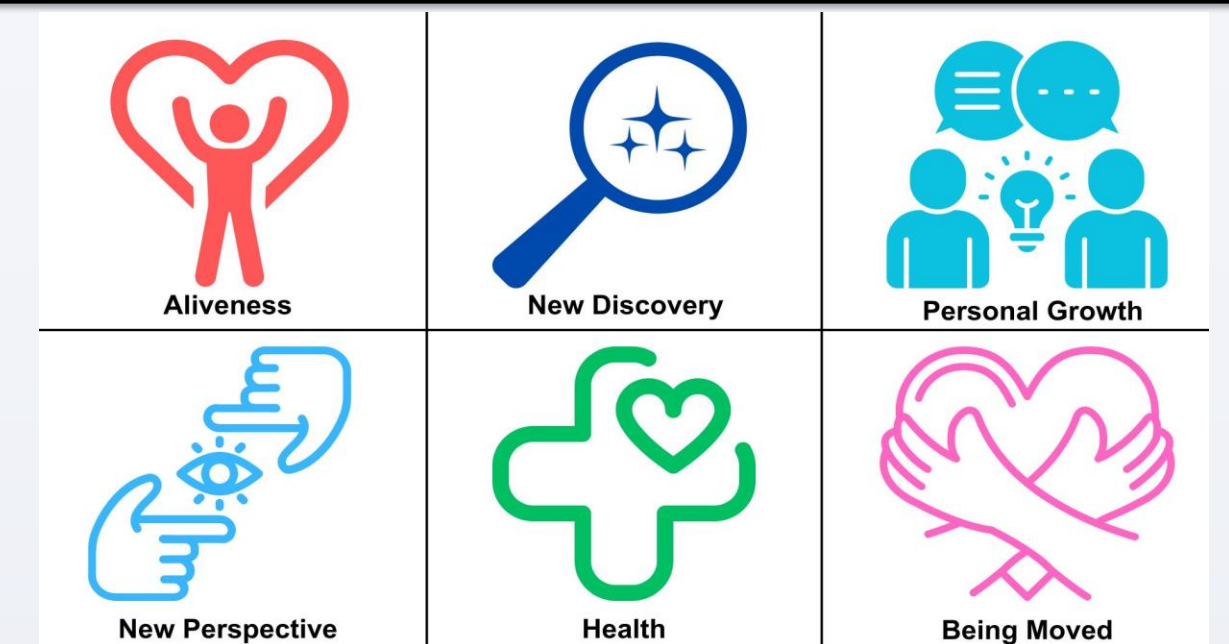


Figure 5. List of Experiences/Feelings participants desire from travel (i.e. FUNCTION)

Discussion

Travel is an important part of enhancing quality of life for many people. Yet, cancer and its treatments can often inhibit a patient from traveling. Cancer survivors seek different experiences/feelings (i.e. FUNCTIONS) from desired travel that are related to their unique values, leading to diverse ways of achieving them (i.e. FORMS). **Regardless of health conditions having an awareness of alternate FORMS that will offer a similar effect to the travel experience can boost a patients' sense of control because they can choose obtainable actions for achieving their goals. Focusing on what they can do immediately is also crucial for patients who experience time as limited.** Expanding a person's perspective on the number of activities that can bring about a certain feeling previously thought to only arise from travel, can be empowering. **By increasing awareness of alternative options, individuals can regain a sense of control and enhance their independence while dealing with the challenges of a cancer diagnosis.**

An organization called Supra Mentor, Inc³, has been developed in Japan to provide cancer patients access to Cancer Journey Coaching and various other mental healthcare supports. More research is needed to measure the effect of Cancer Journey Coaching on QOL as it relates to sense of control.

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Acknowledgement

Naomi Hoffer, a trainer and Certified Cancer Journey Coach at the Cancer Journey Institute.