



# CAN HEALTH FORUMS DEDICATED TO BREAST CANCER BE USEFUL TO CAREGIVERS ?

Analysis of initial messages on a forum over a one-year period

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Nowadays, internet is the second source of information after doctors. Patient associations developed discussion forums (DF) as a response to help patients living with cancer. Our study **describes the content** of messages posted on a DF dedicated to breast cancer and aims to **identify patient needs**, especially those linked to supportive care.

## METHODOLOGY

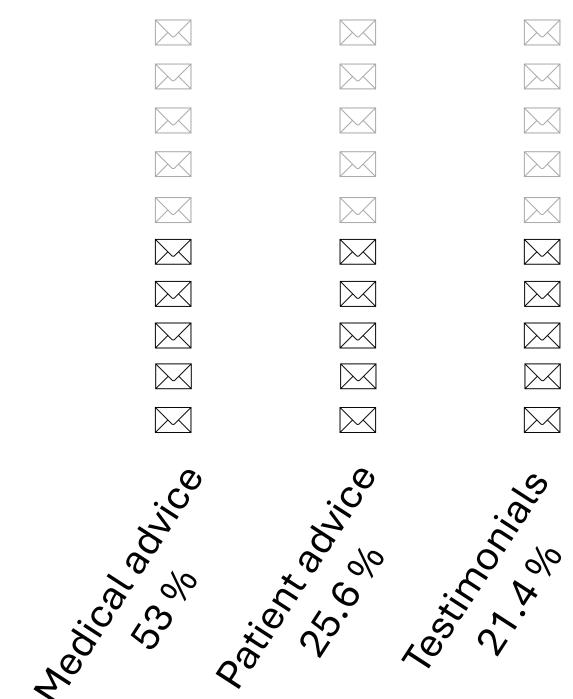
This quantitative and prospective study includes all **initial messages** posted on the National Cancer League (Ligue nationale contre le cancer) DF dedicated to breast cancer in 2021.

## RESULTS

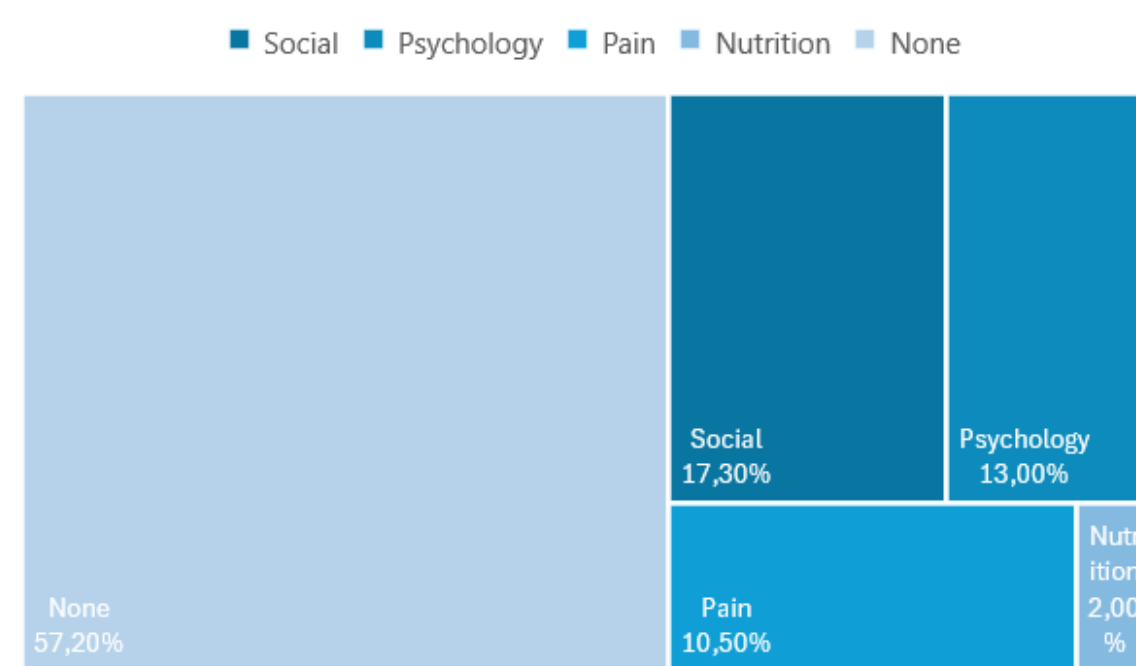
**640 initial messages** included

**312 authors:** 275 patients / 37 relatives

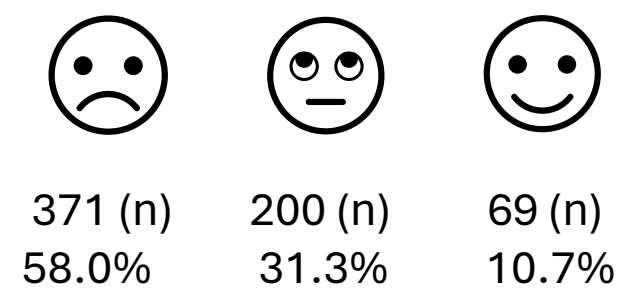
### TYPE OF MESSAGES



### SUPPORTIVE CARE NEED IDENTIFIED



### TONE OF MESSAGES



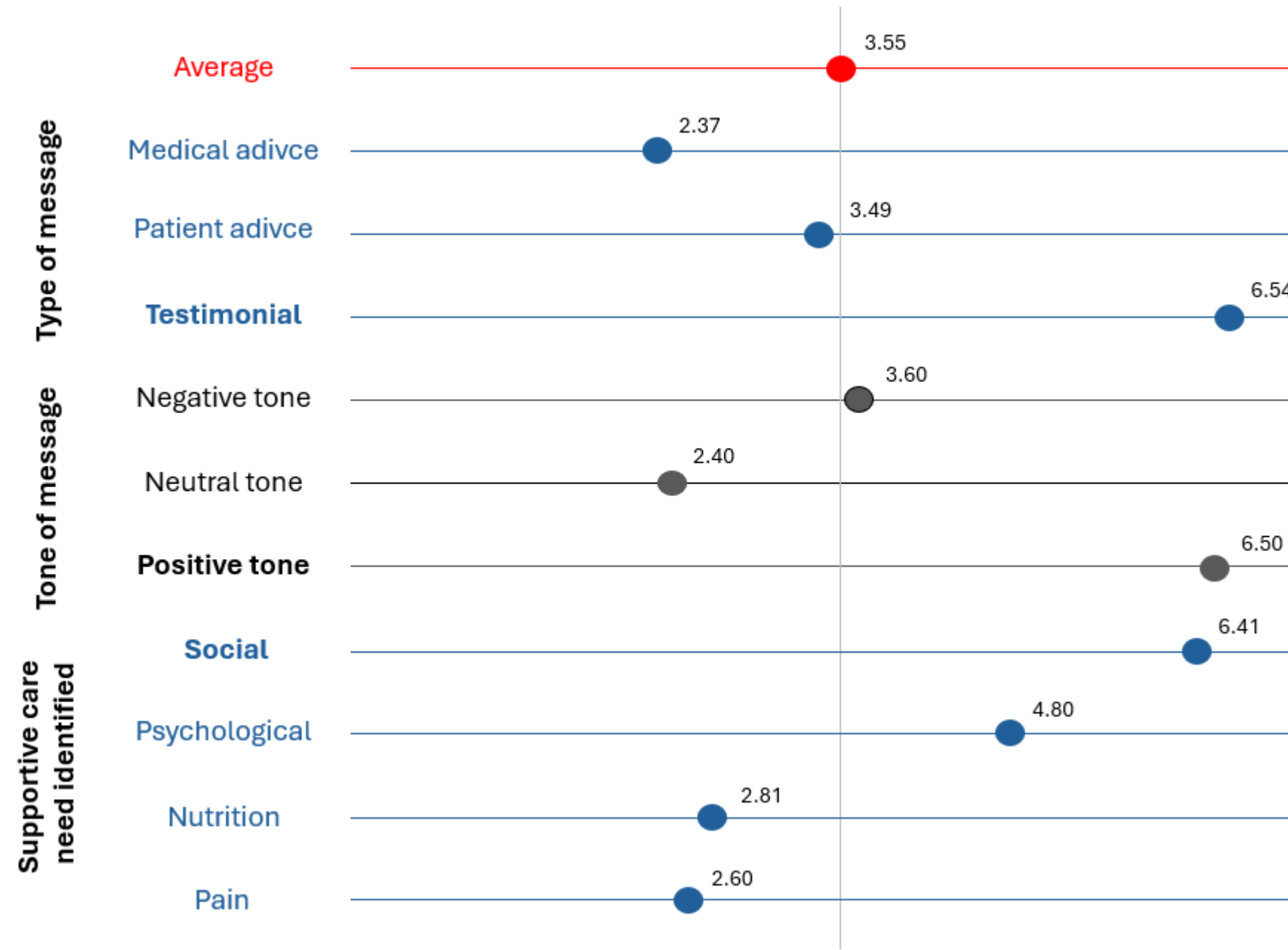
### TYPE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT IDENTIFIED

	Messages (n)	Messages (%)
<b>Informational</b> support	465	72.70%
<b>Companionship</b> support	90	14.10%
<b>Emotional</b> support	65	10.10%
<b>Esteem</b> support	12	1.90%
<b>Tangible</b> support	8	1.20%

## SUBJECTS OF MESSAGES



## NUMBER OF RESPONSES BASED ON MESSAGE CHARACTERISTICS (p < 0,001)



Social support is a psychological concept referring to the provision of assistance or comfort to others, to help them cope with stressors. These resources can be **emotional** (affection, encouragement), **informational** (advice, guidance), **companionship** (belonging), **tangible** (financial assistance, material goods) or **esteem** (promoting one's skills).

## LIMITS

- REPRESENTATIVENESS** 275 patients vs 62000 new cases of breast cancer in France every year
- NUMERIC FRACTURE** 20% of breast cancer affect women aged 75 years above
- PERIOD OF THE STUDY** messages posted during the post-COVID-19 period (less access to supportive care?)

## CONCLUSION

### NEED OF ADDITIONAL MEDICAL INFORMATION

The first request on the forum was **medical advice** (53%) **even after a medical consultation** because over 50% of the messages mentioned previous medical advice from a doctor. **Relatives** also need additional medical information as they published only 2,9% of testimonials vs 12,4% of medical advice (p<0.001). The most frequent subject was adverse events of a non-surgical treatment (18.4% of messages).

### CRUCIAL PERIODS IN PATIENT PATHWAY

Two periods are identified as crucial: the **diagnosis waiting time** and the **follow-up**. During the diagnosis waiting time, 71.9% of messages requested medical advice vs 53% of all messages (p<0.001). In the same way, during the follow-up, 60.3% of messages requested medical advice (p=0.003). During the diagnosis waiting time, the most identified supportive care need was psychological support.

### NEED TO MEET UP WITH PATIENTS

Our results suggest that patients wish to **create a community** on the forum, sharing difficulties and hopes. Companionship was the first social support identified on the forum. Testimonies elicited more responses than medical or patient advice requests (p<0.001) and companionship messages elicited more responses than other types of social support.

SHARE YOUR OPINION ABOUT DISCUSSION FORUMS WITH US !

