

FINANCIAL TOXICITY AMONG PATIENTS RECEIVING TREATMENT FOR ORAL CANCER IN A PUBLIC HOSPITAL IN INDIA: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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Introduction

According to GLOBOCAN, oral cancer is the eleventh most common cancer in Asia and the second-leading cancer in India.¹ In low-and-middle-income countries, financial toxicity (FT) of cancer is high when seeking care in private hospitals.²

However, FT when seeking care in public centers remains unexplored. We aimed to understand the FT of the disease on families of patients receiving treatment for oral cancer in a public hospital in Delhi, India.

Methods

After obtaining approval from the institutional ethics committee, data was collected from 50 patients using a pre-tested interview schedule. Patients above 18 years who were undergoing treatment for all stages of oral cancer were included. The FT of the disease was assessed using the validated FACIT-COST questionnaire. Univariate analysis using Chi-square test was done to assess factors associated with FT and p value of less than 0.05 was considered significant.

Results

The mean age of the population was **48 years** (SD = 11 years), **88% were males**, **28% were illiterate** and only 36% were educated above middle school. **64% families had a dependency ratio of more than 0** and 2 families had members with nobody to depend on in the 15-65 years age group.

Figure 1 – Stage of disease at presentation.

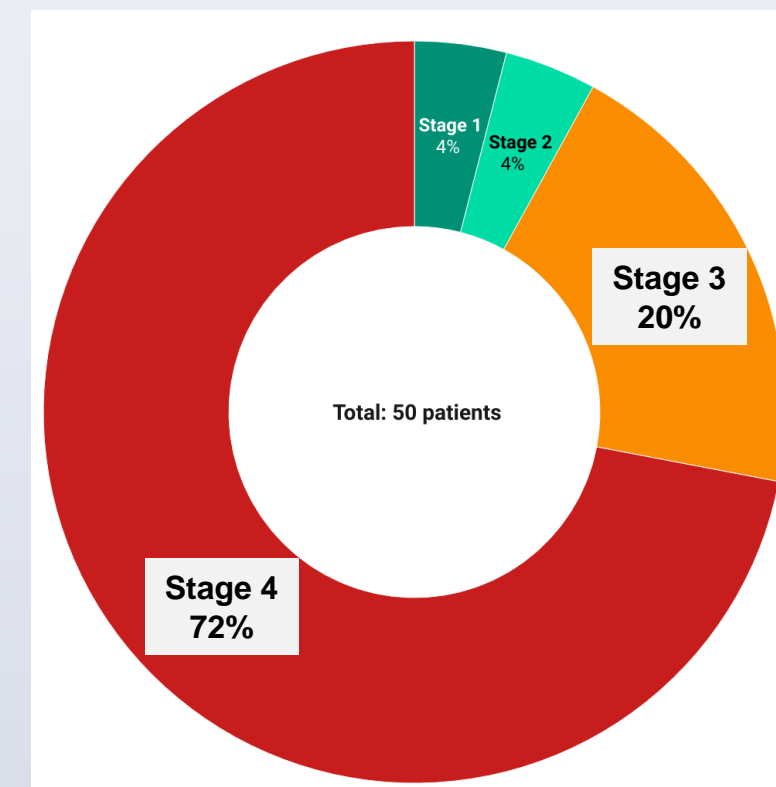
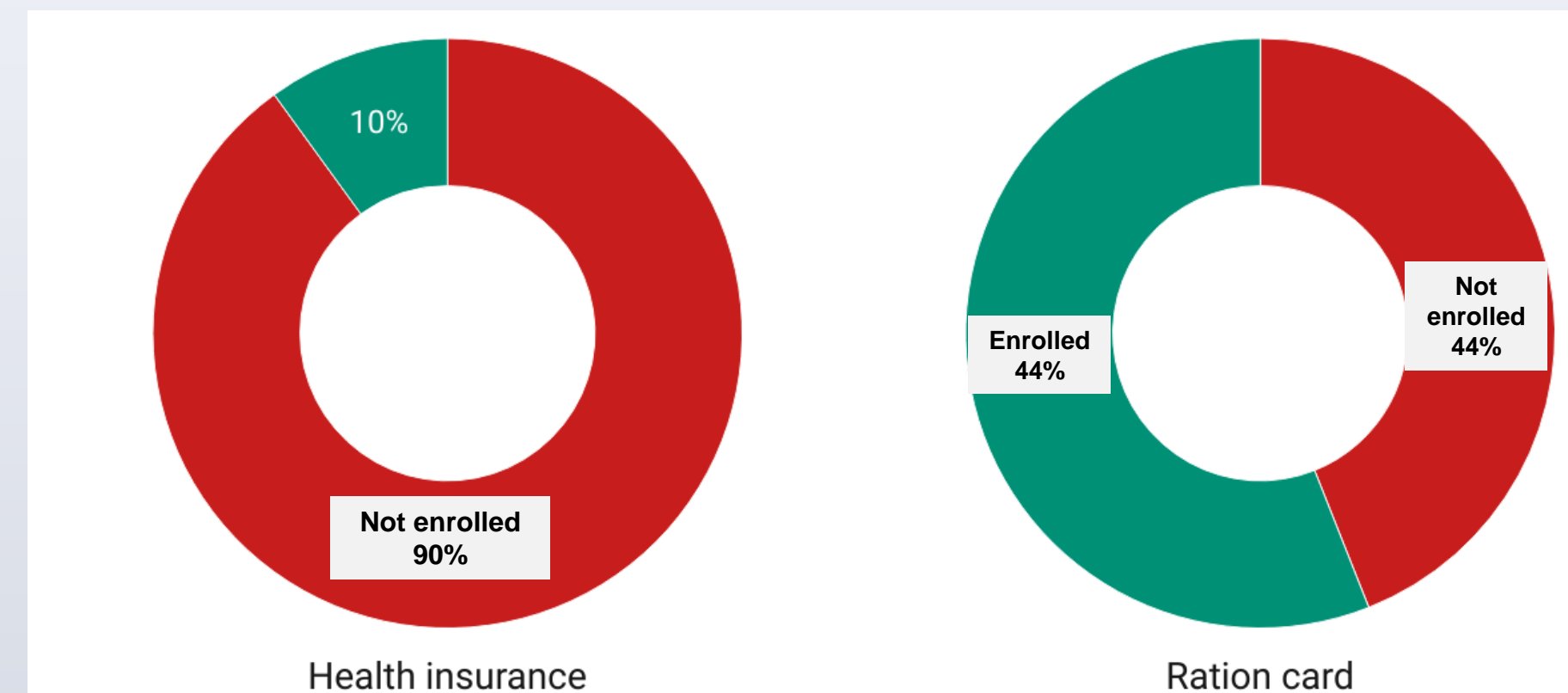


Figure 2 – Socio-economic security of patients

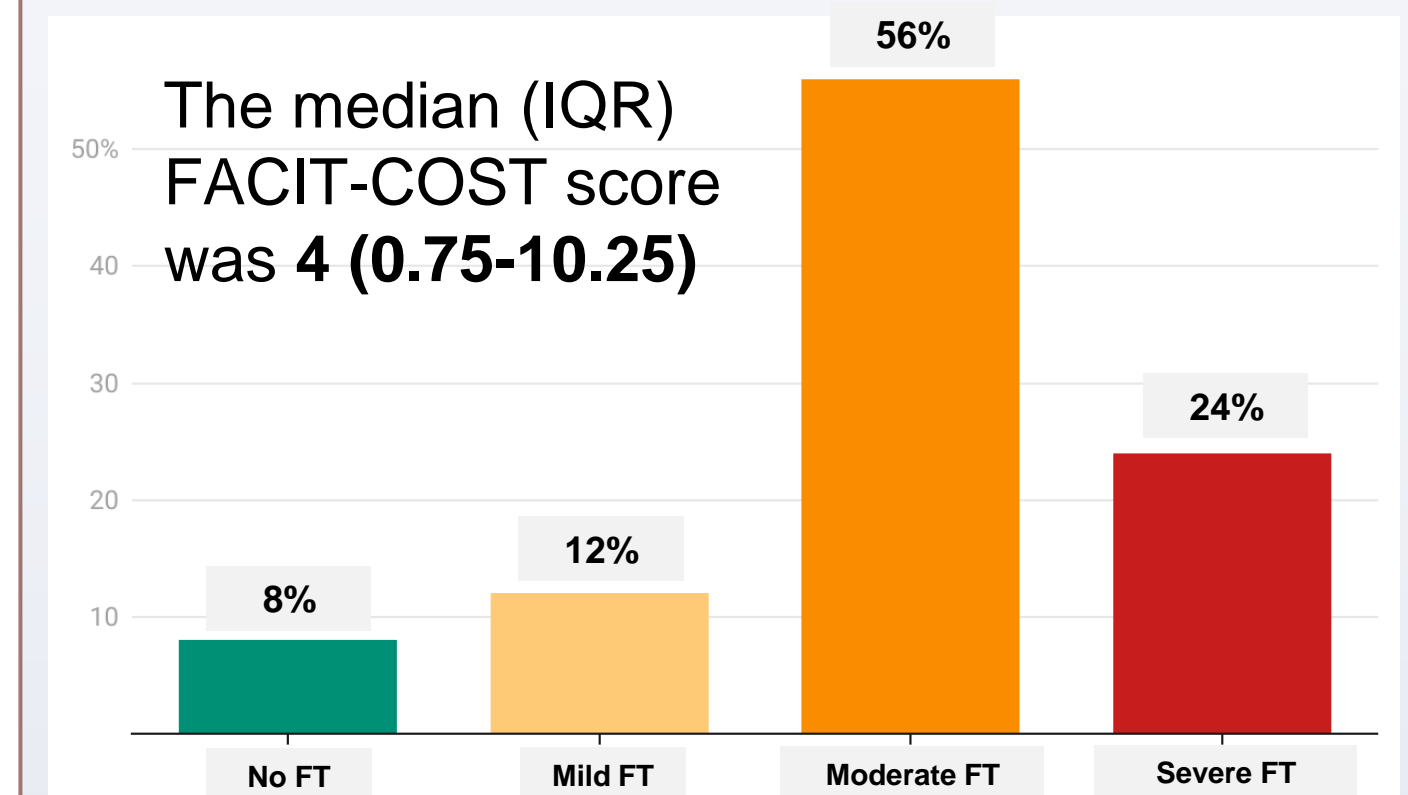


The median (IQR) monthly per capita income was **23 (1,40) USD**.

Sole earners of family	Lost job or stopped working	Families with no source of income	
38%	70%	24%	
Savings of less than 60 USD per annum	Incurred debt due to disease	Median debt	Strongly agreed that disease caused FT
92%	72%	600 USD*	88%

*Range 84-4816 USD

Figure 3 – Financial toxicity as per FACIT-COST



Female gender, **Muslim** religion, people with **debt** and people **without health insurance** were more likely to suffer from moderate or severe FT.

Conclusion

The vast majority of Indian patients with oral cancer treated at a public hospital experienced moderate or severe FT. Future studies should assess the association of demographic factors with the severity of FT, as well as strategies to mitigate it.

References

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