

A Nationwide Survey of Pharmacists' and Nurses' Perspectives on Sexual Well-Being in Cancer Patients in the United Kingdom.

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Introduction

Sexual well-being can be defined as a state of physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being in relation to sexuality.⁽¹⁾ Cancer and cancer treatment can have a profound effect on a person's sexual well-being. Cancer Pharmacists and Nurses are well placed in UK-based services to give practical advice and support to cancer patients.

There are no national guidelines in the United Kingdom (UK) available for addressing the management of cancer patients' sexual well-being, except within specific reproductive organ cancers

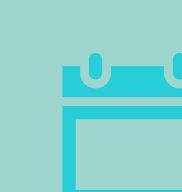
A local survey was undertaken at UCLH in 2023 to explore this gap, which has since expanded into a national study.

This aims survey investigates how cancer pharmacists and nurses across the UK support sexual well-being and the barriers they face in doing so.

Methods



Anonymous electronic survey



Survey distributed to cancer pharmacists and nurses via the British Oncology Pharmacy Association mailing list and UK Oncology Society conference.



The survey comprised of a combination of 20 multiple-choice and open-ended questions



Anonymised responses were collated and analysed

Results

- A total of 99 surveys were completed.
- 61% of respondents were from the pharmacy team; the remaining participants represented three nursing cohorts: clinical nurse specialists, research nurses, and chemotherapy nurses.
- Respondents demonstrated a broad range of experience in oncology practice. Over 77% reported more than 5 years of experience in cancer care, indicating a predominantly experienced respondent population.

Perceived Barrier to discussing Sexual well-being in practice

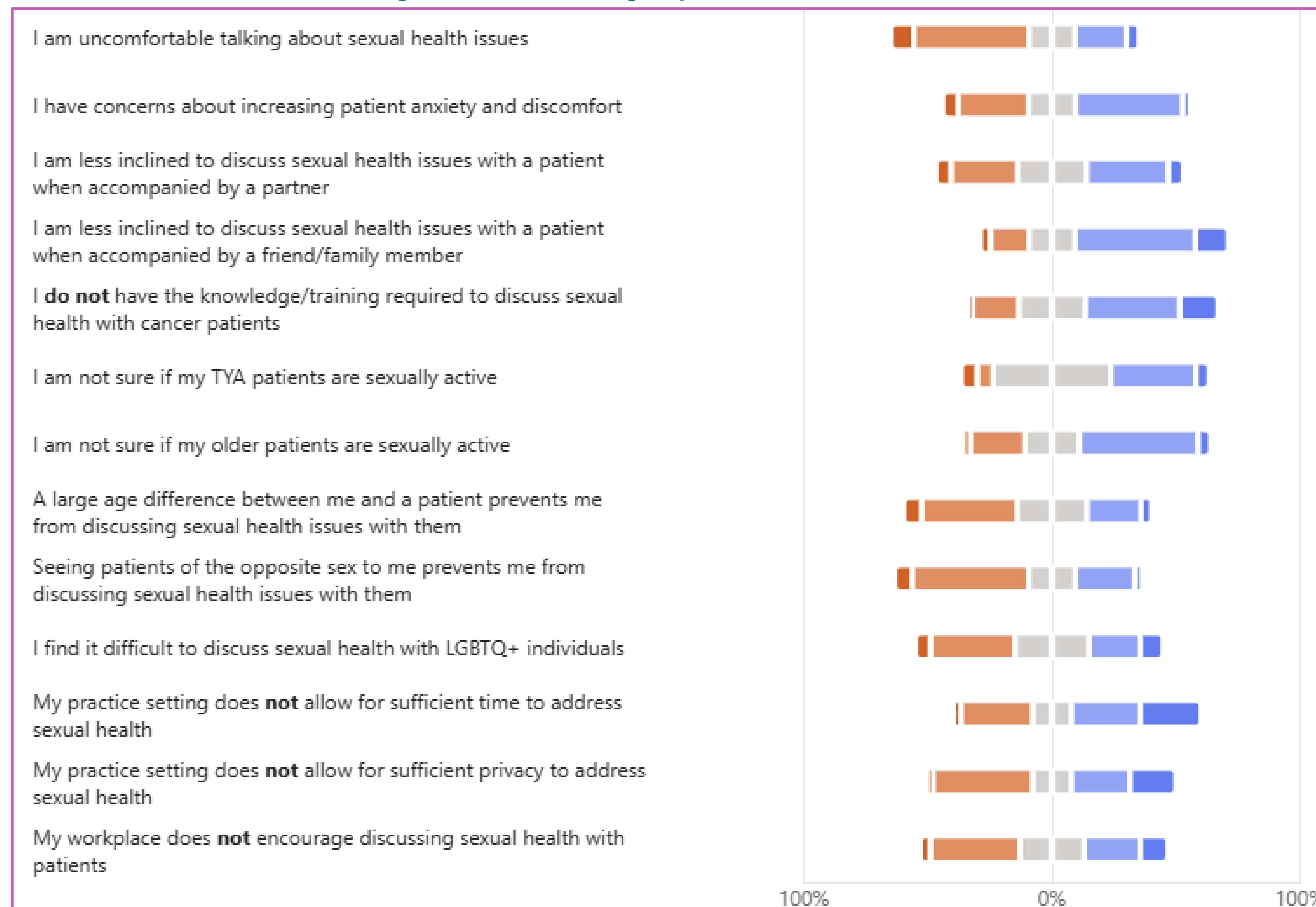


Figure 1. Respondent Feeling and Perceptions towards Barriers to Discussing Cancer Patient Sexual Well-being

Importance of addressing Sexual Well-being

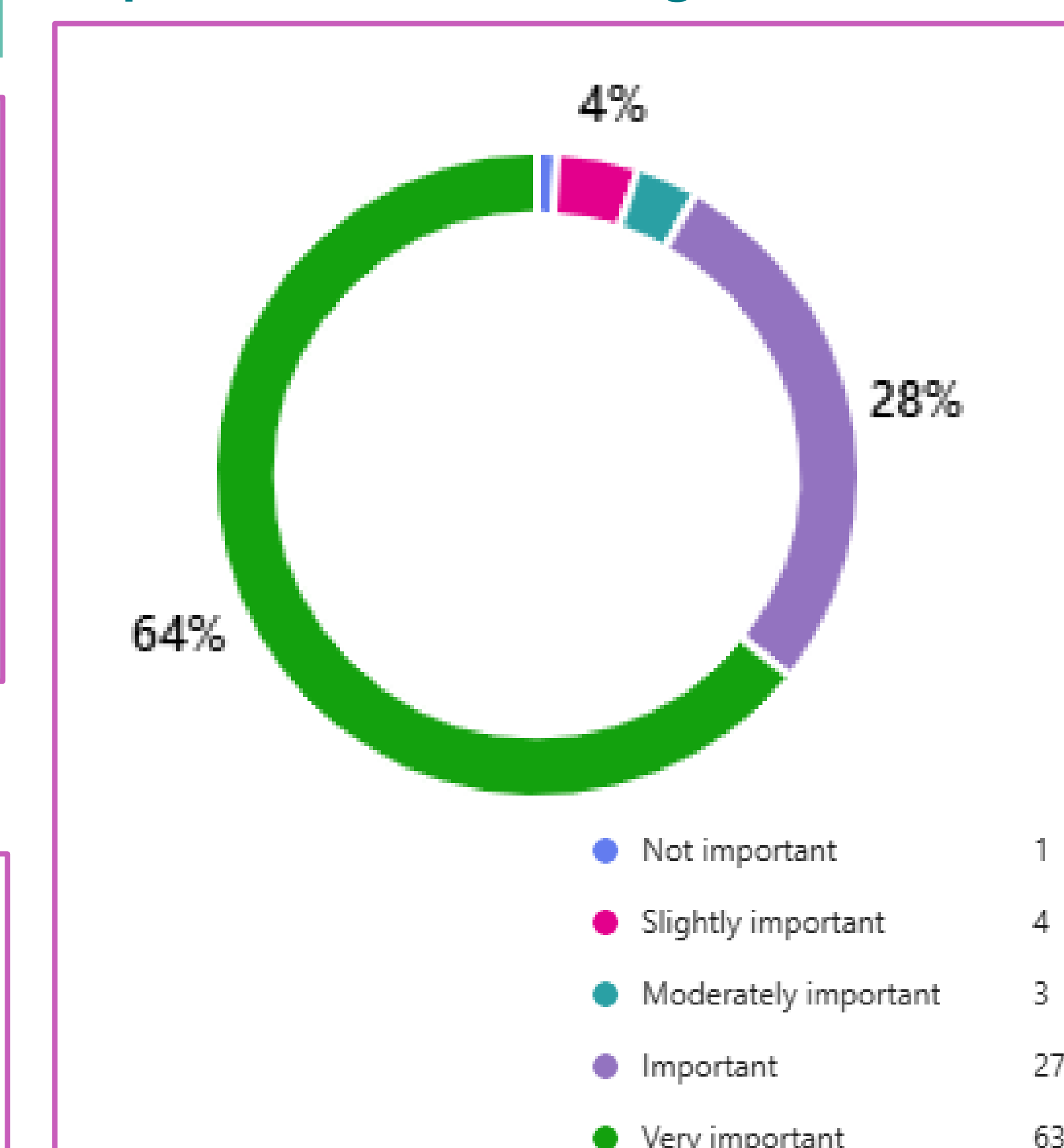


Figure 2. Respondent Feelings towards the importance of addressing sexual health and well-being in cancer patients

Discussion

- There is a disparity between who is perceived as responsible for sexual well-being discussions versus respondent defined best practice
- Barriers identified in the survey must be addressed to improve management of sexual well-being in cancer patients
- This will require national consensus, targeted training and additional resource
- A study exploring patient perspectives is currently in progress.

References

Macmillan Cancer Support. (2019). Sex and cancer. [Online]. Cancer information and support. Last Updated: 30th June 2019. Available at: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/impacts-of-cancer/sex-and-cancer> [Accessed 29 June 2023]. 2. Alisha Shivji, Melanie Danilak, Reanne Booker, Deonne Dersch-Mills, Suni. (2022). Pharmacists' practices and views regarding management of sexual health in patients with cancer. J Oncol Pharm Practice. pp.1-21.