

Older Adults Cancer Survivors: Exploring concerns, help- seeking and income

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CNSA Presentation

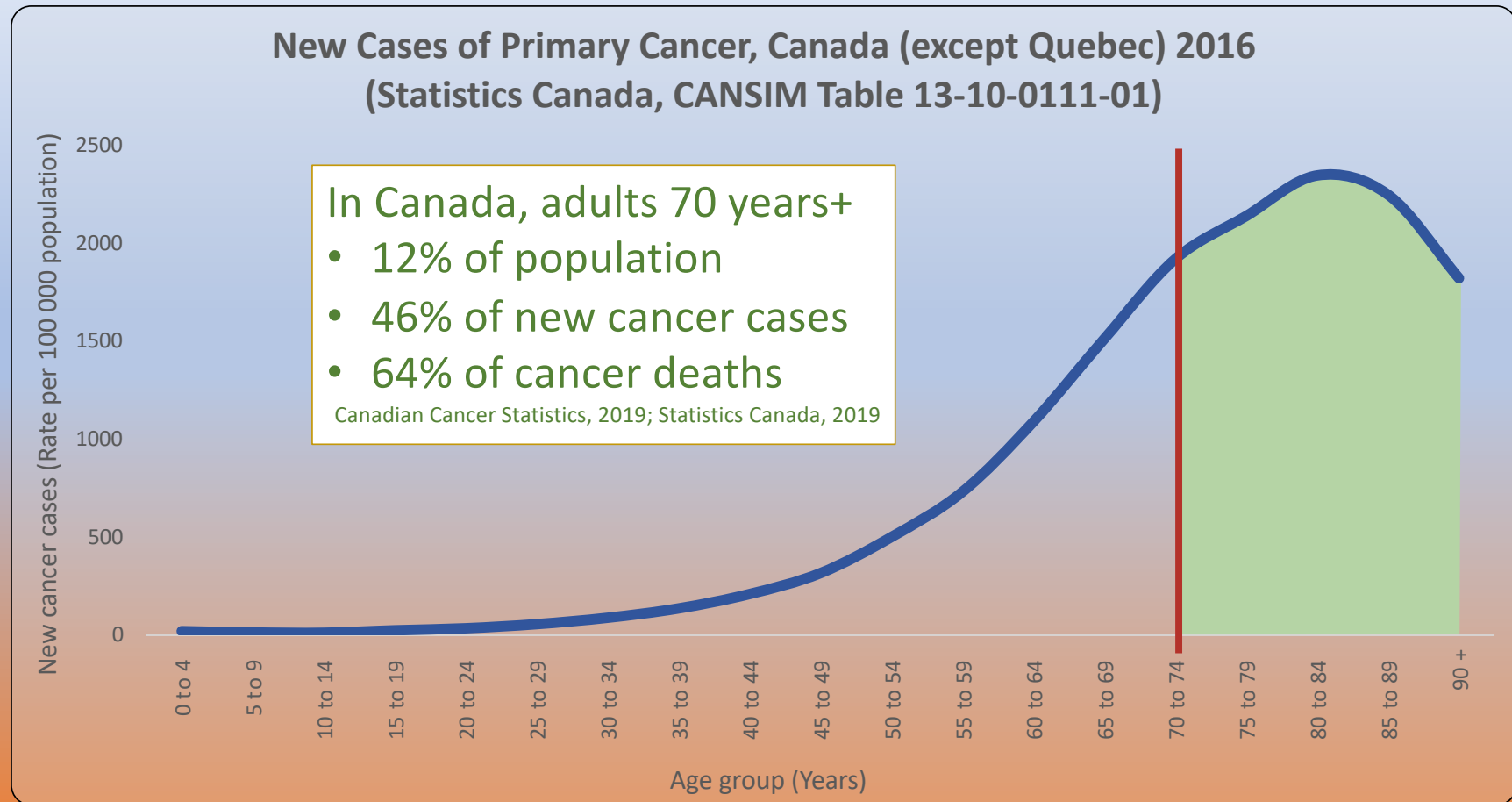
June 2026

Why older adults?

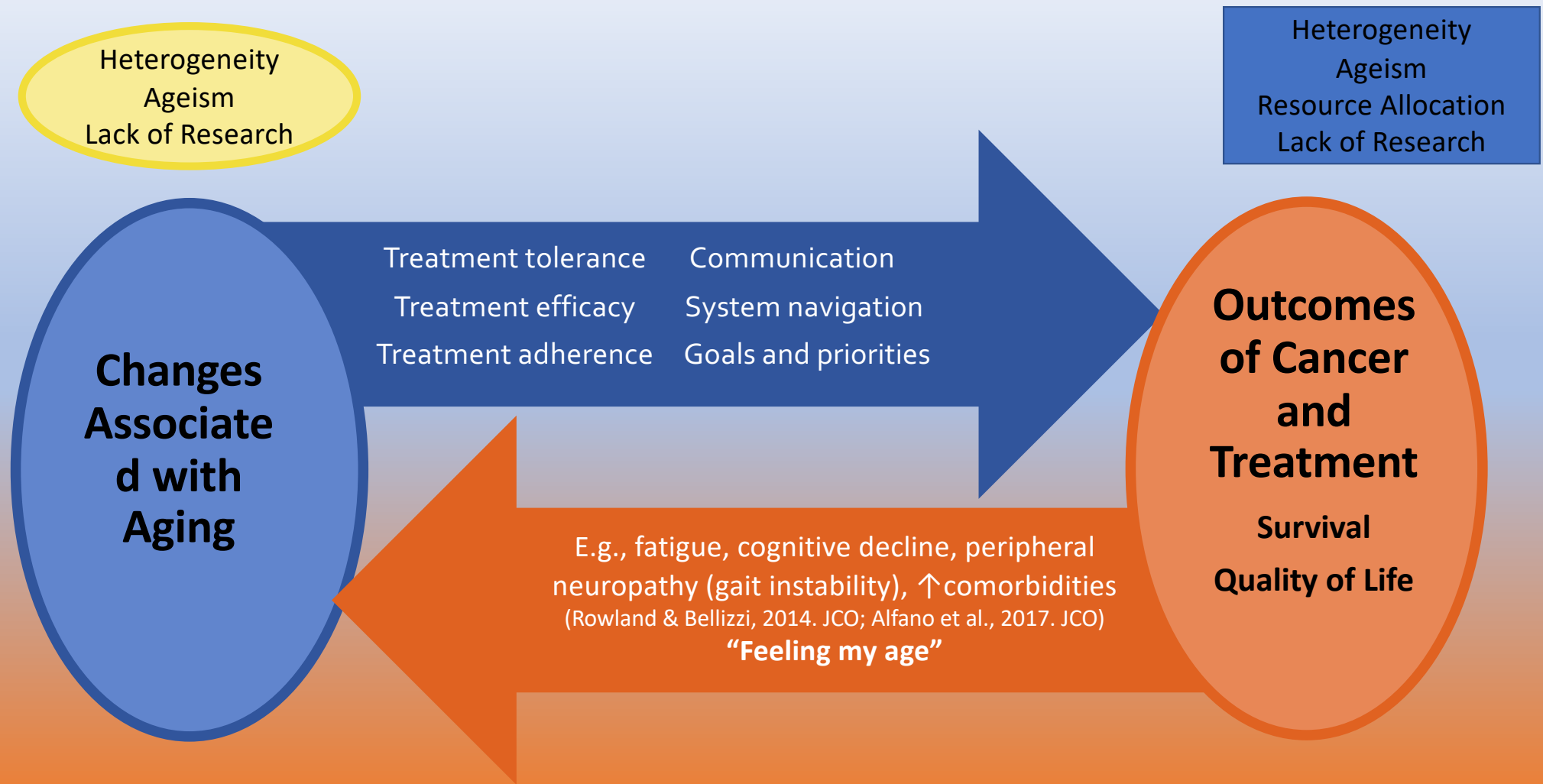
- Fastest growing age cohort in cancer
- Expecting an ever-increasing number of survivors
- Many living with co-morbidities/polypharmacy challenges
- Variation in functional/cognitive status (heterogenous)
- Variation in capacity to return to baseline following illness event
- Needs are complex and multifaceted
- Unmet needs for older adults continue to exist due to difficulty accessing services, professional unresponsiveness, lack of coordination of care, poor communication and lack of information



Aging and Cancer in Canada



Interaction between Aging & Cancer





Context for cancer survivors

- Cancer treatment can accelerate the aging process
- There can be intersection between the side effects of cancer treatment and aging concerns
- Sequelae may complicate recovery
- Cancer Survivors have reported unmet needs which influence quality of life
- Relatively little reported about older adult cancer survivors



Financial context (1)

- In Canada, 'medically necessary' services covered
- Decreased mobility and cognitive changes can impact daily living and need for services – and many valued services are not covered
- Social support networks and financial resources of older adults may not be sufficient to meet these service/care needs
- 28% to 48% of cancer survivors (in general) report financial burden from cancer due to direct (out of pocket) and indirect (lost income) costs
- Two key factors in how individuals manage financial concerns: financial status at diagnosis and financial literacy

Financial context (2)

- Canada – lowest poverty rate for seniors worldwide (12%)
- Employment - main source of income for 40% of those >65 years
- If not working – no employer health benefits
- May not have private coverage or savings; living on fixed incomes
- Social support networks have diminished – little support for issues such as transportation, household assistance, etc.

Transition Study (CPAC)

- Captured experience of cancer survivors 1-3 years post treatment
- Cross sectional survey (drawn from current literature on survivorship)
- Designed as a basis for action to improve system for survivorship
- Disseminated to a random sample of 40,790 survivors from 10 cancer provincial registries
- Adults with breast, prostate, CRC, melanoma (no metastases) and selected hematological cancers (could be followed in community)
- Completed on paper or online; French or English
- Publicly available dataset

Purpose

Explore the relationship between income of cancer survivors >65 years and their concerns (physical, emotional, practical) and help-seeking



Survey items captured changes after treatment

Physical Changes	Emotional Changes	Practical Changes
Fatigue weakness	Anxiety, stress, worry cancer will return	Returning to (or future) work or school
Changes in sexual activities, function	Depression, sadness, loss of interest in everyday things	Getting to and from appointments
Changes in concentration, memory	Changes in sexual intimacy	Paying for health care bills
Nerve problems	Changes in body image (i.e., confidence in appearance, etc.)	Difficult getting health or life insurance
Chronic pain or long-term pain	Changes in relationship with family, partners	Caregiving duties
Hormonal, menopause or fertility	Changes in relationship with friends, coworkers	
Gastrointestinal problems		
Bladder or urinary problems		
Lymphedema		

Secondary Analysis

Trend analysis across income categories
(<25K, 25-<50K; 50K-<75K; >75K)

- Concern about the change (small, moderate, big)
- Whether help was sought for the concern
- Difficulty experienced obtaining help

Returns

Surveys returned:
13,319

(All provinces reflected)

Adults 65+ years:
7975

Answered income question:
5891*

Demographic characteristics (N=5891)

Variable		Number	Percentage
Income Cdn Dollars	- <\$25,000	1,198	20.3%
	- \$25,000 to <\$50,000	2,214	37.6%
	- \$50,000 to <\$75,000	1,237	21.0%
	- >\$75,000	1,242	21.1%
Sex	- Male	3,473	59.0%
	- Female	2,400	40.7%
	- No answer	18	0.3%
Age	- 65-74	3,577	60.7%
	- 75-84	1,914	32.5%
	- 85 and older	400	6.8%
Marital status	- Single	266	4.5%
	- Married/partnered	4,156	70.5%
	- Separated/divorced/widowed	1,423	24.2%
Education	- High School or less	4,360	74.0%
	- Post-secondary degree	854	14.5%
	- (college/university)	558	9.5%
	- University graduate degree	119	2.0%

Disease related variables

Variable		Number	Percent
Disease site	- Prostate	1,844	31.3%
	- Colorectal	1,335	22.7%
	- Breast	1,286	21.8%
	- Melanoma	618	10.5%
	- Hematological	425	7.2%
	- Other	189	3.2%
	- Missing	385	6.5%
Metastases	- No metastases	4,494	76.3%
	- Living with metastases	527	8.9%
	- Unsure	516	8.8%
Time since treatment	- <1 year	751	12.7%
	- 1 year to <3 years	2,525	42.9%
	- 3 years or more	1,453	24.7%
	- Did not receive treatment	941	16.0%

- Variable	Number	%
Comorbidities		
- Yes	4,123	70.0%
Comorbidities		
- Cardiovascular or heart condition; hypertension or high blood pressure	2,228	54.0%
- Arthritis, osteoarthritis, or other rheumatic disease	1,978	48.0%
- Diabetes	859	20.8%
- Mental health issues	474	11.5%
Caregiving Responsibilities		
- Provides support/care for an adult friend / family member?	Yes – 1,271	21.6%

Physical item reported as a concern	<25K	25,000-<50K	50,000 - <75K	>75,000	P value (Cochran-Armitage test for trends)
Fatigue, weakness	759 (71%) N=1069	1350 (66%) N=2044	715 (61%) N=1171	660 (56%) N=1184	<0.001
Changes in concentration, memory	418 (40%) N=1052	666 (33%) N=2013	319 (27%) N=1163	302 (26%) N=1170	<0.001
Changes in sexual activities/function	342 (33%) N=1049	842 (41%) N=2044	541 (46%) N=1170	553 (47%) N=1187	<0.001
Nerve problems	386 (37%) N=1050	659 (33%) N=2088	350 (30%) N=1162	285 (24%) N=1170	<0.001
Chronic pain	419 (41%) N=1027	607 (30%) N=2006	277 (24%) N=1155	237 (20%) N=1169	<0.001
Gastrointestinal problems	456 (44%) N=1043	780 (38%) N=2030	393 (34%) N=1165	380 (33%) N=1168	<0.001
Lymphoma	289 (28%) N=1021	419 (21%) N=1991	184 (16%) N=1155	145 (13%) N=1164	<0.001

Sought help for physical concerns

Physical item reported sought help for their concern	<25K	25,000-<50K	50,000 - <75K	>75,000	P value (Cochran-Armitage test for trends)
Fatigue, weakness	297 (43%) N=697	448 (38%) N=1258	198 (29%) N=674	185 (29%) N=631	<0.001
Changes in concentration, memory	115 (31%) N=370	154 (25%) N=615	62 (20%) N=303	50 (18%) N=282	<0.001
Nerve problems	187 (53%) N=351	329 (53%) N=624	158 (47%) N=334	131 (47%) N=276	0.05
Chronic pain	258 (64%) N=401	326 (58%) N=567	149 (56%) N=268	112 (50%) N=224	<0.001

Difficulty obtaining help for physical concerns

Physical item Reported experienced difficulty in obtaining help for their concern	<25K	25,000-<50K	50,000 - <75K	>75,000	P value (Cochran- Armitage test for trends)
Fatigue, weakness	36%	36%	36%	33%	0.67
Changes in concentration, memory	56%	47%	48%	51%	0.46
Changes in sexual activities/function	39%	40%	34%	36%	0.26
Nerve problems	41%	39%	46%	51%	0.65
Chronic pain	34%	33%	38%	37%	0.47
Gastrointestinal problems	31%	24%	28%	31%	0.65
Lymphoma	25%	25%	27%	26%	0.66

Emotional concern - anxiety

Anxiety, stress, worry about cancer returning	<25K	25,000-<50K	50,000 - <75K	>75,000	P value (Cochran-Armitage test for trends)
Reported as a concern	630 (63%) N=1003	1143 (43%) N=1894	644 (60%) N=1073	648 (58%) N=1111	0.05
Reported as a BIG concern	164 (26%)	194 (17%)	90 (14%)	66 (10%)	
Reported sought help for their concern	189 (33%) N=577	289 (27%) N=1072	141 (23%) N=616	153 (24%) N=625	<0.001
Those who sought help for their concern that experienced difficulty (hard or very hard to find help/no help obtained)	50 (27%) N=183	56 (19%) N=288	35 (25%) N=141	30 (29%) N=153	0.25

Emotional item – depression

Depression, sadness, loss of interest in everyday things	<25K	25,000-<50K	50,000 - <75K	>75,000	P value (Cochran-Armitage test for trends)
Reported as a concern	474 (49%) N=964	745 (41%) N=1819	396 (38%) N=1052	357 (32%) N=1103	<0.001
Reported as a BIG concern	110 (23%)	123 (17%)	52 (13%)	35 (10%)	
Reported sought help for their concern	165 (36%) N=455	197 (27%) N=721	102 (27%) N=384	77 (23%) N=342	<0.001
Those who sought help for their concern that experienced difficulty (hard or very hard to find help/no help obtained)	47 (29%) N=162	48 (24%) N=196	30 (29%) N=102	24 (31%) N=77	0.64

Difficulty obtaining help for emotional concerns

Emotional items reported as experienced difficulty in obtaining help for their concern	<25K	25,000-<50K	50,000 - <75K	>75,000	P value (Cochran-Armitage test for trends)
Anxiety, stress, worry about cancer returning	27%	19%	25%	20%	0.25
Depression, sadness, loss of interest in everyday things	29%	24%	29%	31%	0.64
Changes in sexual intimacy	44%	39%	34%	38%	0.36
Changes in body image (confidence in appearance, etc.)	32%	41%	39%	39%	0.44
Changes in relationships with family, partners	53%	48%	39%	43%	0.20
Changes in relationships with friends, co-workers	56%	52%	50%	50%	0.66

Practical item - transportation

Transportation, getting to and from appointments	<25K	25,000-<50K	50,000 - <75K	>75,000	P value (Cochran-Armitage test for trends)
Reported as a concern	355 (33%) N=1063	409 (20%) N=2047	168 (12%) N=1175	128 (11%) N=1191	<0.001
Reported as a BIG concern	98 (28%)	69 (17%)	22 (13%)	18 (14%)	
Reported sought help for their concern	179 (67%) N=315	168 (46%) N=368	65 (41%) N=157	44 (36%) N=123	<0.001
Those who sought help for their concern that experienced difficulty (hard or very hard to find help/no help obtained)	57 (32%) N=176	47 (28%) N=167	17 (27%) N=63	5 (12%) N=43	0.01

Practical item - financial

Financial – paying for health care bills	<25K	25,000-<50K	50,000 - <75K	>75,000	P value (Cochran-Armitage test for trends)
Reported as a concern	322 (81%) N=1046	381 (19%) N=2029	144 (12%) N=1175	85 (7%) N=1189	<0.001
Reported as a BIG concern	107 (33%)	88 (23%)	16 (11%)	6 (7%)	
Reported sought help for their concern	142 (52%) N=274	124 (35%) N=351	38 (29%) N=130	18 (22%) N=82	<0.001
Those who sought help for their concern that experienced difficulty (hard or very hard to find help/no help obtained)	77 (55%) N=141	67 (54%) N=123	21 (58%) N=36	10 (56%) N=85	0.80

Difficulty obtaining help for practical concerns

Practical items reported as experienced difficulty in obtaining help for their concern	<25K	25,000 - <50K	50,000 - <75K	>75,000	P value (Cochran-Armitage test for trends)
Return to (or future) work of school	52%	19%	28%	26%	0.09
Getting to and from appointments	32%	28%	27%	12%	0.01
Paying for health care bills	55%	54%	59%	56%	0.80
Difficulty getting health insurance	71%	69%	68%	61%	0.33
Caregiving duties	51%	49%	33%	38%	0.19

Domain	Items assessed in trend analysis	Reported concerns	Sought help	Experienced difficulty
Physical	Fatigue weakness	<0.001	<0.001	
	Changes in sexual activities, function	<0.001		
	Changes in concentration, memory	<0.001	<0.001	
	Nerve problems	<0.001	0.05	
	Chronic pain or long-term pain	<0.001	<0.001	
	Hormonal, menopause or fertility	0.05		
	Gastrointestinal problems	<0.001		
	Bladder or urinary problems			
	Lymphedema	<0.001		
Emotional	Anxiety, stress, worry cancer will return	0.05	<0.001	
	Depression, sadness, loss of interest in everyday things	<0.001	<0.001	
	Changes in sexual intimacy	<0.001		
	Changes in body image (i.e., confidence in appearance, etc.)	<0.001	0.004	
	Changes in relationship with family, partners			
	Changes in relationship with friends, coworkers	<0.001	0.004	
Practical	Returning to (or future) work or school			
	Getting to and from appointments	<0.001	<0.001	0.01
	Paying for health care bills	<0.001	<0.001	
	Difficult getting health or life insurance		0.006	
	Caregiving duties	0.003	0.01	

Implications

Clinical care

- Recognition of concerns (especially those in low-income groups)
- Conversation about desire for assistance/offer of available help
- Establish easily mobilized referral pathways/plan of care

Service planning

- Availability of services
- Accessibility of services (location)
- Appropriateness of services for age group

Drawing from.....Questions or comments

- Fitch MI, Nicoll I, Lockwood G, Loiselle C, Longo CJ, Newton L, & Strohschein FJ. Exploring the relationships between income and emotional/practical concerns and help-seeking by older adult cancer survivors: A secondary analysis (Journal of Geriatric Oncology)
- Nicoll I, Lockwood G, Strohschein FJ, Fitch L, Longo CJ, Newton L, & Fitch MI. Relationship between income and concerns about physical changes and help-seeking by older adult cancer survivors: A secondary analysis (BMC Gerontology)

