
save your skin
FOUNDATION



LA FONDATION
sauve ta peau

“The Continued Affects of COVID-19 on Melanoma, Ocular Melanoma, and Non-melanoma Skin Cancer Patients”

A 2021 Patient Survey by Save Your Skin Foundation

Save Your Skin Foundation, February 2021

Introduction	4
Question 1: “who is answering this questionnaire? If more than one choice qualifies, please check the most appropriate”	4
Question 2: “What province or territory are you a resident of?”	4
Question 3: “What type of cancer do you, or did you previously, have? Check all that apply”	5
Question 4: “what best describes your stage of care? Check all that apply.”	6
Question 5: “Have you contracted the COVID-19 virus?”	7
Question 6: “If you answered 'YES' to the above, please indicate which, if any, of these situations applied to you.”	7
Question 7: “Have you had any cancellations or postponements for the following situations? Check all that apply.”	7
Question 8: “To what degree has COVID-19 created difficulties connecting to any type of healthcare providers (General physician, clinician, nurse, pharmacist, or other)?”	7
Question 9: “To what degree has the continuity of your oncology care been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?”	8
Question 10: “Have you received, or been offered, consultations with health professionals by telephone or videoconference since the beginning of the pandemic?”	9
Question 11: “If you answered ‘YES’ to the above question, have you found a telephone or videoconference to be an appropriate substitution for an in- person appointment?”	9
Question 12: “Have you been given a continued option for telephone or videoconference consultations or appointments?”	9
Question 13: “To what degree has COVID-19 created difficulties in receiving drug therapy or treatment prescribed by your oncologist, either for your cancer or for side effect management?”	10
Question 14: “If you answered 'SOME' or 'A LOT' to the previous question, which drug(s) or treatment(s) are you having trouble obtaining?”	10
Question 15: “What type of oncology drugs do you take for your treatments? Check all that apply.”	10

Question 16: “To what degree do you have confidence in the ability of your oncology healthcare team to provide appropriate care and treatment to you at this time?”	11
Question 17: “Is this pandemic causing you more anxiety than usual, or aggravating any existing mental health issues?”	12
Question 18: “To what degree has COVID-19 affected your emotional wellbeing? Check all that apply.”	12
Question 19: “To what degree has COVID-19 affected your quality of life? Check all that apply.”	12
Question 20: “to what degree have you experienced financial difficulties in the form of lost wages, or other reasons?”	13
Question 21: “to what degree have you experienced difficulties accessing food and/or food deliveries?”	13
Question 22: “to what degree have you experienced difficulties accessing transportation for health care?”	13
Questions 23: “to what degree have you experienced difficulties staying connected with friends and family?”	14
Question 24: “Since the beginning of the pandemic, have you seen any improvement in the following...”	15
Question 25: “Have you experienced other problems that have not been identified in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic that you wish to communicate to us?”	16
Question 26: “What is your greatest concern and/or need in the currently situation?”	16
French survey results	17
Conclusion: COVID-19 Impacts in April 2020 versus January 2021	18

INTRODUCTION

At the outset of the shelter-in-place mandate resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Save Your Skin Foundation ran a survey to assess the impact of the pandemic on patients with melanoma, ocular melanoma, and non-melanoma skin cancer. This survey took place from April 9th—27th, 2020, and was available in identical forms in English and French.¹ As the COVID-19 situation continues to affect the day-to-day lives of Canadians, we ran another survey from January 27-February 16, 2021, to assess the continued impact of the pandemic on the medical needs of this patient population. This survey was also available in identical English and French versions, with the French version being distributed to the French-speaking Canadian provinces. The survey consisted of 26 questions, which ranged between multiple choice, multi-selection, and write-in, and participants had the option to skip any question. For the sake of brevity, written answers are not included, and are grouped by topic. The results of the French survey are summarized after the results of the English survey, and compared with the English results. After the summarization of the French survey, the conclusion of this report will compare the responses of the most recent survey to those given at the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown. For access to the full survey results, contact the Save Your Skin Foundation at natalie@saveyourskin.ca.

QUESTION 1: “WHO IS ANSWERING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE? IF MORE THAN ONE CHOICE QUALIFIES, PLEASE CHECK THE MOST APPROPRIATE”

The first question in the survey confirmed the demographics of those taking the survey. The majority of participants (90%) are currently living with melanoma, ocular melanoma, or non-melanoma skin cancer. 5% of the participants are caregivers, while 5% categorized themselves as neither a patient or caregiver. These included former melanoma patients.

QUESTION 2: “WHAT PROVINCE OR TERRITORY ARE YOU A RESIDENT OF?”

The second question clarifies which Canadian Province or Territory the participants are from. In descending order, 34.15% of participants are from British Columbia; 34.15% from Ontario; 14.63% from Alberta; 4.88% from Manitoba and Saskatchewan individually; 2.44% from New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island individually. No participants were from Newfoundland and Labrador, Québec (as this population received the French survey), or any of the Territories.

¹ A report outlining the results of this survey is available [here](#).

QUESTION 3: “WHAT TYPE OF CANCER DO YOU, OR DID YOU PREVIOUSLY, HAVE? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY”

This question asked what form of melanoma or non-melanoma skin cancer the survey participants either have, or previously had. 64.29% of participants listed melanoma; 28.57% of participants listed Basal Cell Carcinoma; 11.90% ocular melanoma; 7.14% Squamous Cell Carcinoma; 11.90% of participants stated that their cancers did not fall into these categories: these participants specified that they had mucosal or metastatic melanoma. Zero participants indicated that they had been diagnosed with Merkel cell carcinoma.

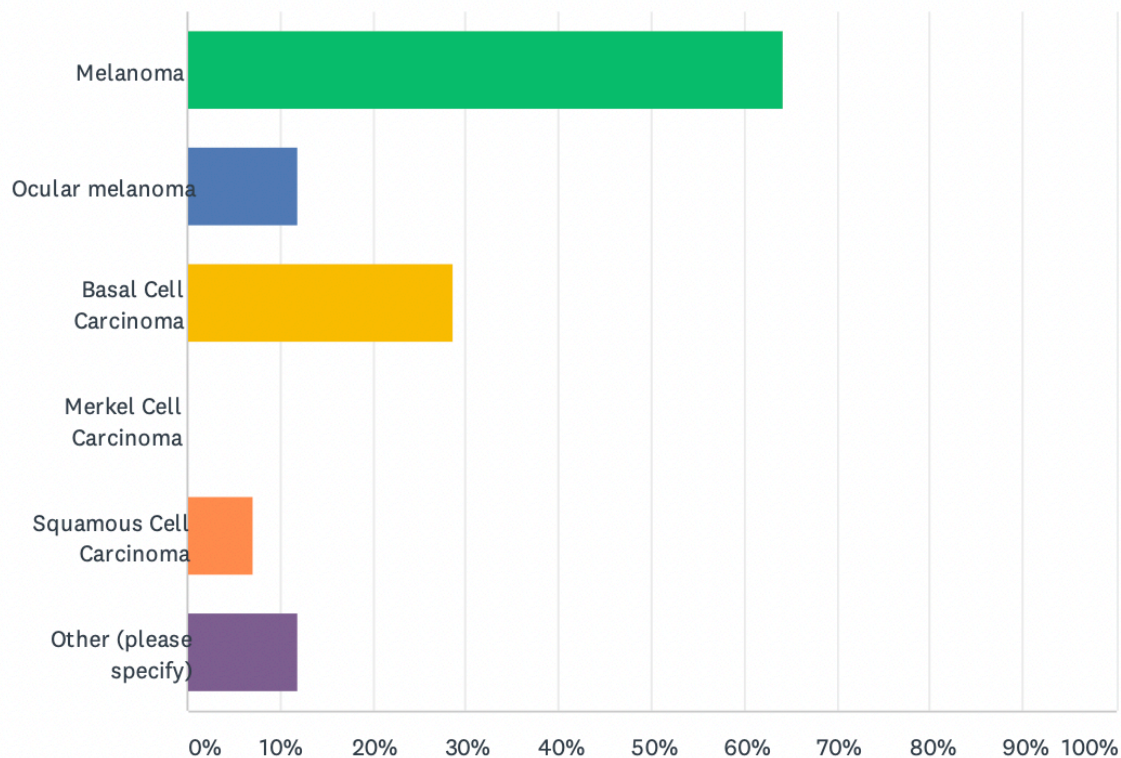


Fig. 1: “What type of cancer do you, or did you previously, have? Check all that apply.”

QUESTION 4: “WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR STAGE OF CARE? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.”

This question determined where the participants were in the care process at the time they took the survey. The majority of survey participants (47.62%) were in in surveillance or follow-up care; 26.19% were in treatment; 16.67% had no evidence of disease; 26.19% were post-surgery; 4.76% were waiting for treatment; and 2.38% participants were waiting for surgery. 7.14% of responses were categorized as “other,” which included patients both post-operation and post-treatment.

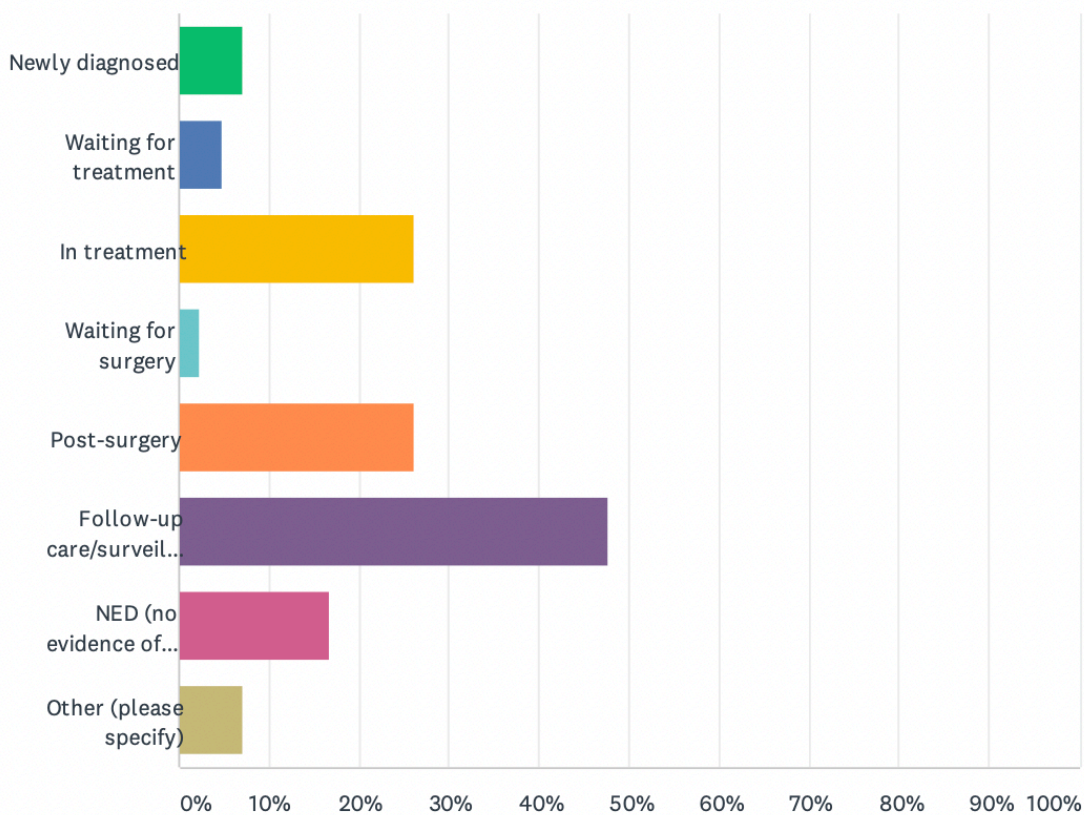


Fig. 2: “What best describes your stage of care? Check all that apply.”

QUESTION 5: “HAVE YOU CONTRACTED THE COVID-19 VIRUS?”

This question determined whether any of the survey participants have contracted the COVID-19 virus in the past year. Fortunately, 100% of the responses selected that they had not contracted COVID-19.

QUESTION 6: “IF YOU ANSWERED 'YES' TO THE ABOVE, PLEASE INDICATE WHICH, IF ANY, OF THESE SITUATIONS APPLIED TO YOU.”

As none of the survey participants indicated that they had contracted COVID-19 in response to question 5, the responses to question 6 are not applicable.

QUESTION 7: “HAVE YOU HAD ANY CANCELLATIONS OR POSTPONEMENTS FOR THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.”

This question asked survey participants what issues they have encountered in receiving their regular care due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The options presented were “medical follow-ups,” “treatments,” “bloodwork,” “medical imaging,” “diagnostic testing,” “appointments for diagnosis and development of care plan,” “surgery,” and “clinical studies or research protocols. 27.03% of participants stated that they are having difficulty accessing medical “follow-ups with [their] doctors;” 13.51% of participants claimed that they are having difficulty receiving their treatments, surgeries, and diagnosis/care plan appointments individually; 10.81% were having difficulty receiving diagnostic testing; 8.11% accessing medical imaging procedures; and 2.70% are having difficulty getting bloodwork tests done due to the pandemic. 5.41% of responses listed the difficulties they were having accessing care in the ‘other’ category. These responses mentioned inconsistencies in care due to risk minimization procedures for oncologists, lockdown-related delays, not being willing to travel to areas with higher COVID-19-associated risks for treatment, and things falling between the cracks due to the overwhelmed medical system.

QUESTION 8: “TO WHAT DEGREE HAS COVID-19 CREATED DIFFICULTIES CONNECTING TO ANY TYPE OF HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS (GENERAL PHYSICIAN, CLINICIAN, NURSE, PHARMACIST, OR OTHER)?”

This question asked whether survey participants were having a difficult time contacting healthcare professionals. 40.48% of respondents stated that they have not yet; 38.10% have experienced some issues; 14.29% have experienced several issues; and 2.38% are anticipating that there will be further disruptions in their contact with their healthcare team during COVID. 4.76% of survey participants suggested that the question was not applicable to them.

This question also gave survey participants the option to write in responses in case they wanted to elaborate or did not feel that the options given represented their experience. There were seven responses in this section, four of which expressed that their appointments have been either delayed or cancelled, one noting that travelling to their treatments is difficult in winter conditions, and one noting that their appointments have moved to a virtual platform.

QUESTION 9: “TO WHAT DEGREE HAS THE CONTINUITY OF YOUR ONCOLOGY CARE BEEN AFFECTED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?”

Question 9 clarified to what extent the participants oncology-specific care has been affected by the pandemic. 45.24% of responses stated that they have had no issues thus far; 30.95% reported that there have been some issues in their care; and 4.76% responded that they have experienced “a lot” of disruption, and that they anticipate further disruptions, separately. 14.29% of participants felt that the question was not applicable to them.

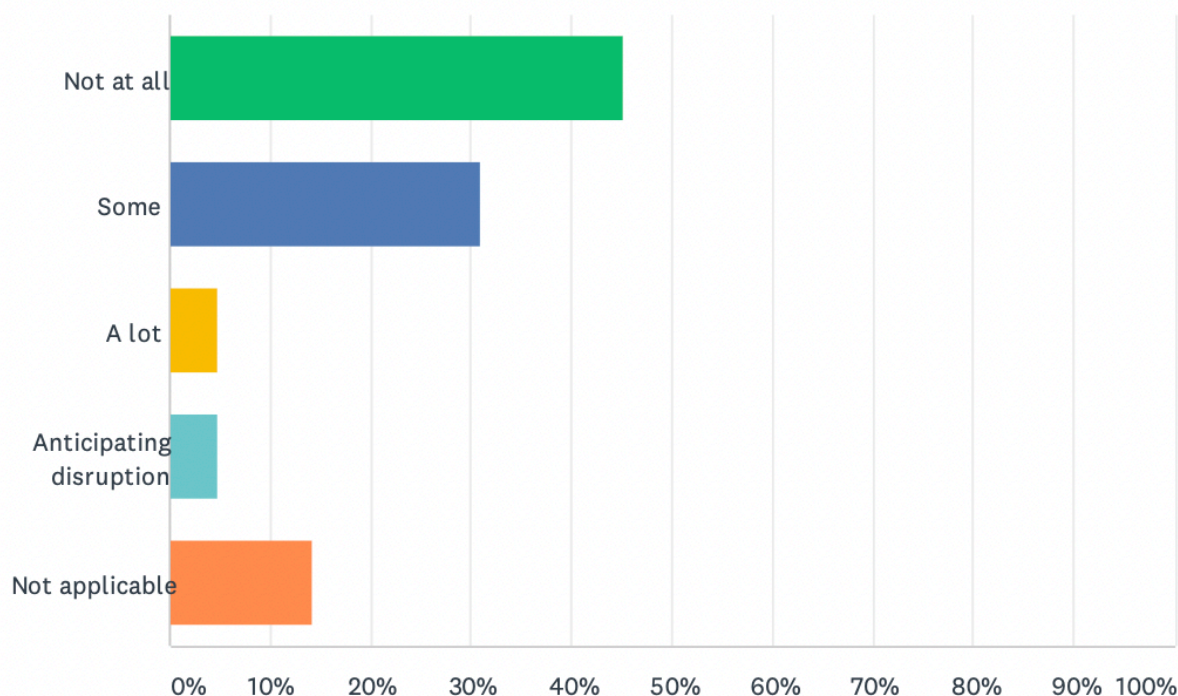


Fig. 3: “To What Degree has the Continuity of your Oncology Care Been Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic?”

QUESTION 10: “HAVE YOU RECEIVED, OR BEEN OFFERED, CONSULTATIONS WITH HEALTH PROFESSIONALS BY TELEPHONE OR VIDEOCONFERENCE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE PANDEMIC?”

This question asks whether survey participants have utilized, or been offered, telephone or videoconference medical appointments since the beginning of the shelter-in-place mandates in early 2020. 71.43% of participants claimed that they have had, or been offered, telephone or videoconference appointments; 19.05% have not; and 9.52% said the question was not applicable to them.

Question 10 allowed participants to include additional details if they so desire. Six participants added more information here, all of which described in further detail their particular situation in terms of negotiating between virtual, telephone, and in person appointments. In one of these responses, the patient mentioned developing anxiety at the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown, which has since been treated with medication.

QUESTION 11: “IF YOU ANSWERED ‘YES’ TO THE ABOVE QUESTION, HAVE YOU FOUND A TELEPHONE OR VIDEOCONFERENCE TO BE AN APPROPRIATE SUBSTITUTION FOR AN IN- PERSON APPOINTMENT?”

Question 11 asks participants who have had, or have been offered, telephone or videoconference appointments whether they have found these appointments a satisfactory replacement for an in-person appointment. The majority of responses, 64.10% stated that they found their distance appointments to be a suitable substitution for their regular appointments. 12.82% felt these distance options were not an appropriate substitution, and 23.08% said that the question was not applicable to them; some of these participants have likely not needed to have virtual or telephone appointments.

This question also allowed participants to include more details, and eight decided to add more information. Overall, these responses reflect a preference for in-person appointments. Responses also noted that virtual appointments can create inconsistencies in terms of which oncologist they see, are less preferable when initiating new types of treatment, and make it difficult to show areas of concern. One response noted that having the face-to-face relationship with their oncologist was emotionally important to them during their experience with cancer.

QUESTION 12: “HAVE YOU BEEN GIVEN A CONTINUED OPTION FOR TELEPHONE OR VIDEOCONFERENCE CONSULTATIONS OR APPOINTMENTS?”

Here, we tried to ascertain whether virtual appointments have been a sustained, and sustainable, option for patients throughout the COVID-19 lockdown. 55% of patients responded that they have continued to have telephone or virtual appointments throughout the pandemic; 22.50% have stopped having telephone or virtual

appointments; 10.00% were unsure what their options were in this case; and 12.50% said that the question was not applicable to them.

One patient opted to add additional details to their answer, which noted that they are in a place in their treatment journey where they have not required further appointments.

QUESTION 13: “TO WHAT DEGREE HAS COVID-19 CREATED DIFFICULTIES IN RECEIVING DRUG THERAPY OR TREATMENT PRESCRIBED BY YOUR ONCOLOGIST, EITHER FOR YOUR CANCER OR FOR SIDE EFFECT MANAGEMENT?”

Question 13 asked whether survey participants have had difficulty receiving their scheduled care due to the COVID-19 outbreak. 51.22% of participants said that they have had no issues receiving care; 7.32% have had a “lot” of issues; and 4.88% have had “some” issues. 46.59% of participants stated that the question was not applicable to them.

This question also included the option for participants to write in more details, and two participants opted to do so. One of these no longer requires care, and the other noted that on more than one occasion they have not received entire prescriptions due to medication shortages.

QUESTION 14: “IF YOU ANSWERED 'SOME' OR 'A LOT' TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION, WHICH DRUG(S) OR TREATMENT(S) ARE YOU HAVING TROUBLE OBTAINING?”

Question 14, which asked participants to write in their responses, ascertained which drug(s) or treatment(s) the participants were having difficulty accessing due to the pandemic. About 1/3 of these responses mentioned appointment cancellations. One mentioned that they had a one week delay receiving KEYTRUDA, one has experienced delays receiving wound care, and one has had a delay receiving immunotherapy.

QUESTION 15: “WHAT TYPE OF ONCOLOGY DRUGS DO YOU TAKE FOR YOUR TREATMENTS? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.”

This question asked what category of oncology drugs the survey participants are taking for their treatments. The options available for participants to choose were “targeted therapy (oral),” “immunotherapy (intravenous),” “chemotherapy (intravenous),” “sub-cutaneous injection,” “not applicable,” and “other (please specify),” wherein participants had the option to write in treatments that were not listed. 24.39% of participants stated that they are taking immunotherapy (intravenous); 4.88% are taking targeted therapy (oral) and sub-cutaneous injection, separately. 17.07% selected other, and items listed here included liquid nitrogen and radiation

therapy. 53.66% of participants stated that the question was not applicable to them. Zero participants indicated that they receive chemotherapy at this time.

QUESTION 16: “TO WHAT DEGREE DO YOU HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE ABILITY OF YOUR ONCOLOGY HEALTHCARE TEAM TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE CARE AND TREATMENT TO YOU AT THIS TIME?”

Question 16 asks participants whether they feel their healthcare team can continue to provide them with the care they need during the COVID-19 pandemic. 58.54% of participants selected “a lot;” 19.51% have “some” confidence in their healthcare team; and 4.88% expressed having no trust in their healthcare team during this time. 17.07% of participants felt that the question was not applicable to them.

This question also gave participants the option to write in more details. Within these responses, two participants noted that they are unsure what will happen in terms of their care if they metastasize or need additional surgery.

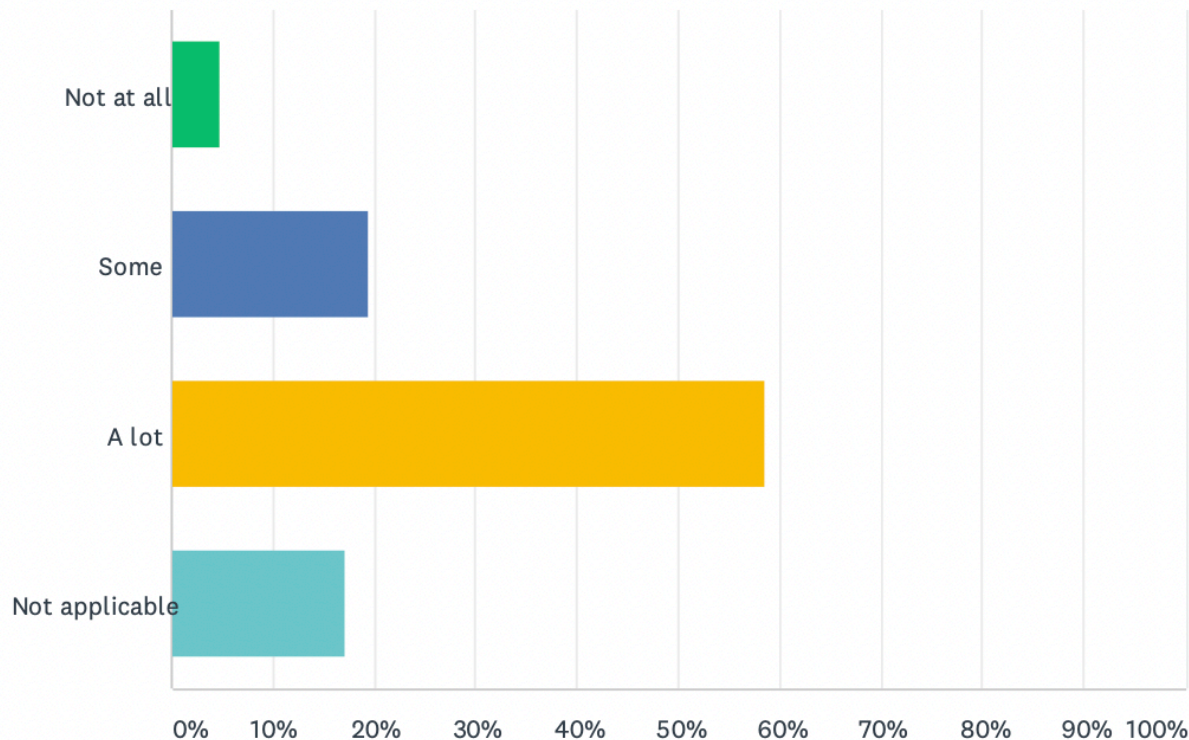


Fig. 4: “To What Degree do you have Confidence in the Ability of your Oncology Healthcare Team to Provide Appropriate Care and Treatment to You at this Time?”

QUESTION 17: “IS THIS PANDEMIC CAUSING YOU MORE ANXIETY THAN USUAL, OR AGGRAVATING ANY EXISTING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES?”

This question asked participants whether the pandemic has caused an increase in their anxiety levels. The majority, 57.14%, stated that their anxiety has increased somewhat; 26.19% that their anxiety has not increased at all; and 16.67% said that their anxiety has increased “a lot.” Clearly, the results of this question suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic, and the resulting changes in healthcare for cancer patients, are a cause of anxiety for survey participants.

More details about this anxiety can be found in the responses patients wrote in to this question. Half of these written responses cite feeling more anxious than usual because of the pandemic, while the others mention struggling with isolation and having difficulty parsing the different information being released surrounding COVID-19.

QUESTION 18: “TO WHAT DEGREE HAS COVID-19 AFFECTED YOUR EMOTIONAL WELLBEING? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.”

Question 18 elaborated on the previous question by asking what specific aspects of the COVID-19 outbreak are causing the survey participants to experience heightened anxiety. The choices available were “experiencing anxiety, fear, stress, or overwhelm for yourself or others,” “experiencing loneliness or isolation,” “[feeling] emotionally withdrawn,” “experiencing fear that you or others are more at risk for COVID-19 complications,” and “experiencing frustration or anger.” Participants were also invited to select that their emotional well-being had not been affected, “other,” or fill in alternative answers.

41.46% of participants reported experiencing anxiety and stress for themselves or others; 34.15% are experiencing loneliness or isolation; 29.27% of participants expressed fear that they are more at risk for COVID-19 complications; 24.39% are experiencing frustration or anger; and 21.95% are [feeling] emotionally withdrawn. 31.71% of participants answered that their emotional well-being has not been affected, while 9.76% of participants filled in ‘other’ responses. Comments in this section included frustration, fatigue, concerns about being immunocompromised due to treatment, and concerns about not catching a recurrence in time.

QUESTION 19: “TO WHAT DEGREE HAS COVID-19 AFFECTED YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.”

This question asked about the medical and social affects of COVID on the survey participants. The majority of participants (58.54%) said that they are “experiencing difficulty staying connected with family and friends;” 26.83% are “experiencing difficulty attending appointments or seeking necessary healthcare because of fear of exposure to COVID-19;” 21.95% said they are “experiencing difficulty attending appointments or seeking necessary healthcare because of cancelled services or localized lockdown limitations;” 14.63% feel that their quality of life has “not been affected;” 2.44% feel that they are “experiencing difficulty accessing information related

to COVID-19;” and 9.76% felt that the listed options did not apply to their situation. 9.76% of participants selected “other” and filled in responses. The majority of these responses cited having difficulty with isolation and being unable to see family and friends, and one response mentioned that having non-cancer-related medical procedures be delayed is taking a toll on their mental health.

QUESTION 20: “TO WHAT DEGREE HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES IN THE FORM OF LOST WAGES, OR OTHER REASONS?”

This question asked survey participants whether COVID-19 has affected their financial situation in the form of job losses, wage losses, or in other ways. Fortunately, the majority of participants (69.05%) stated that they have not experienced any changes in their financial situation due to the pandemic, while 14.29% said that they have experienced “a lot” of financial difficulties, 11.90% have experienced “some” financial difficulties, and 4.76% said that the question was not applicable to them.

For this question, survey participants had the option to write in additional details. There were a variety of responses to this question, including lost money on travel or the cancellation of contract work, participants being unable to have full-time work, and being on disability income.

QUESTION 21: “TO WHAT DEGREE HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED DIFFICULTIES ACCESSING FOOD AND/OR FOOD DELIVERIES?”

Question 21 ascertained whether survey participants have had any difficulty accessing food or food delivery services. 73.81% answered that they have had no difficulties in this area, 21.43% said they have had “some” difficulties, and 4.76% felt that the question was not applicable to them. 0% of participants felt that they have been facing “a lot” of difficulties.

This question allowed survey participants to write in additional details if desired. In this section, participants showed a mixture of appreciation for food delivery services, while others cited the reasons it was not appropriate for their situation.

QUESTION 22: “TO WHAT DEGREE HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED DIFFICULTIES ACCESSING TRANSPORTATION FOR HEALTH CARE?”

This question measured the extent to which survey participation have been experiencing difficulties accessing transportation to their health care services. 83.33% of participants reported having no difficulties at all accessing transportation, and 4.76% of participants answered that they are having “some” difficulty and “a lot” of difficulty separately. 7.14% wrote that the question was not applicable to them.

This question allowed survey participants to write in additional details if desired. Here, participants reported having their own modes of transportation, so access to transportation had not been an issue for them, or that they had to fly to different cities to access treatment, which has proven difficult due to flight cancellations and high rates of COVID-19 in certain areas.

QUESTIONS 23: “TO WHAT DEGREE HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED DIFFICULTIES STAYING CONNECTED WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY?”

Question 23 asked survey participants whether, and to what extent, they had been having difficulties staying connected with their friends and family. 64.29% responded that they have been having “some” difficulties keeping in touch with friends and family, 21.43% feel that they have been having “a lot” of difficulty keeping in touch with friends and family, and 11.90% have had no difficulties staying in touch with their friends and family. 2.38% felt that the question was not applicable to them.

This question allowed survey participants to write in additional details if desired. Here, participants described staying isolated and staying in their bubble due to fears of COVID-19 transmission and other participants have felt like having conversation topics has been challenging due to so many things being put on pause.

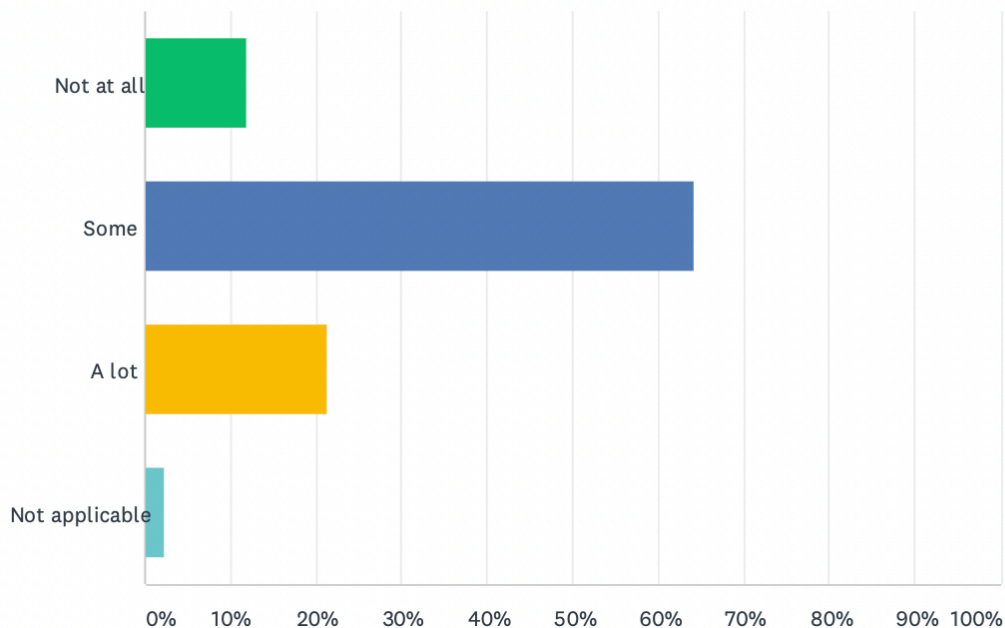


Fig. 5: “To What Degree have you Experienced Difficulties Staying Connected with Friends and Family?”

QUESTION 24: “SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE PANDEMIC, HAVE YOU SEEN ANY IMPROVEMENT IN THE FOLLOWING...”

This question asked patients to scale on a 3-point gauge including “not at all,” “some,” or “a lot” whether they have seen improvement in the areas listed below. Participants also had the option to indicate if they felt the question was not applicable to them. The areas participants were asked to rate, with the results for each item, include:

- Attending appointments or seeking necessary healthcare because of cancelled services or localized lockdown limitations

Not at all: 26.67%; some: 46.67%; a lot: 10.00%; not applicable: 16.67%

- Attending appointments or seeking necessary healthcare because of fear of exposure to COVID-19

Not at all: 54.84%; some: 25.81%; a lot: 9.68%; not applicable: 9.68%

- Accessing information needed related to COVID-19

Not at all: 40.63%; some: 21.88%; a lot: 28.13%; not applicable: 9.38%

- Staying connected with family and friends

Not at all: 39.39%; some: 51.52%; a lot: 6.06%; not applicable: 3.03%

- Accessing treatment(s)

Not at all: 41.38%; some: 34.48%; a lot: 0%; not applicable: 24.14%

- Accessing diagnostic testing, bloodwork, or medical imaging

Not at all: 56.25%; some: 31.25%; a lot: 6.25%; not applicable: 6.25%

- Accessing complementary or rehabilitative care services

Not at all: 33.33%; some: 3.33%; a lot: 3.33%; not applicable: 60%

- Accessing transportation for health care

Not at all: 48.28%; some: 6.90%; a lot: 0%; not applicable: 44.38%

- Accessing food and/or food deliveries

Not at all: 50.55%; some: 15.63%; a lot: 9.38%; not applicable: 25%

- Experiencing financial difficulties

Not at all: 53.13%; some: 3.13%; a lot: 9.38%; not applicable: 34.38%

The responses to question 24 demonstrate that while some aspects of life for the survey participants have improved, such as being able to stay connected with family and friends, and some aspects of their medical care (attending appointments generally, receiving treatments), participants have seen little improvement in the ability of the majority of their healthcare services to adapt to COVID-19, and in some cases are still struggling with transportation, food access, and financial security.

QUESTION 25: “HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED OTHER PROBLEMS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN IDENTIFIED IN RELATION TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC THAT YOU WISH TO COMMUNICATE TO US?”

Question 25 asked participants whether they had any other COVID-19 related concerns that had not been addressed in the survey. Several participants responded to this question, though these responses largely suggested that the survey had been thorough enough to cover their concerns. However, some participants did add additional comments. These included noting that they are seeing fatigue in their health care professionals, that the pandemic has impacted their mental health, including by exacerbating their melanoma-related anxiety. Several comments also reiterated that they are growing weary of isolation from friends and family.

QUESTION 26: “WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST CONCERN AND/OR NEED IN THE CURRENTLY SITUATION?”

The final question in the survey, question 26, allowed survey participants to write in what they feel is their biggest concern or need in our current situation. The most cited concern was missing human contact, followed closely by feeling anxious about keeping on top of their cancer given the delays they are experiencing in their medical care. Other responses included concerns about themselves or their family contracting COVID, hoping to be prioritized for the vaccine, missing in-person medical care, having access to clinical trials and surgeries, a lack of COVID-related information, and wanting things to return to normal.

FRENCH SURVEY RESULTS

From January 27-February 16, 2021, Save Your Skin Foundation ran a concurrent patient survey titled “Impact de la pandémie de COVID-19 sur les patients Canadiens atteints de mélanome, de mélanome oculaire et de cancer de la peau non mélanome,” which was directed toward French Canadian melanoma, ocular melanoma, and non-melanoma skin cancer patients. The French survey consisted of the same 26 questions as the English survey outlined above. 100% of these participants are melanoma patients, and all of them are residents of Québec. Thankfully, none of the French survey participants have contracted COVID-19.

Comparing the English and French surveys, there are some notable differences in the responses. For instance, to question 7 (“have you had any cancellations or postponements for the following situations? Check all that apply”), the English responses suggested that they were having relatively consistent delays across most categories of their medical care, while the French survey responses reported no delays in receiving treatments, diagnoses, or care plans, but a high rate of delays for medical imaging, 33.33%, which is especially high in contrast to the 8.11% that reported medical imaging delays in the English survey. There was also a significant disparity between the responses to mental wellness-related questions in the English and French surveys. While over 50% of the English responses noted that their anxiety had somewhat increased during the COVID-19 pandemic (question 17), while 50% of the French responses to the same question stated that they have not experienced any additional anxiety due to the pandemic. This difference may be related to the aforementioned responses about delays in medical care, as the French participants recorded fewer delays in their medical care.

There were also several inconsistencies between the English and the French responses to question 24, which asked the participants to rate whether a variety of areas in medical care and lifestyle support on a sliding scale. In this section, the French participants noted that there have been no improvements in appointment delays due to COVID-19, and they have felt no improvements in their concerns about attending appointments and being exposed to COVID-19, while 56.67% of the English participants have seen some improvement in appointment delays and 35.49% have seen improvements in their comfort level in attending appointments despite exposure to COVID-19. 75% of French responses noted that there has been only a little improvement in their ability to access medical imaging, diagnostic testing, and bloodwork, while the English participants have seen significantly less improvement in this area. The French responses also reported no improvements in financial difficulties and issues with food access, while approximately 50% of the English participants noted improvement in both aspects.

Comparing the English and French surveys demonstrates that while the French survey participants reported experiencing fewer delays in medical care and less of an increase in anxiety, yet the French participants have noted no improvements in appointment delays, comfort level in attending appointments, financial security and food access, whereas the English participants reported improvements in all of these areas.

CONCLUSION: COVID-19 IMPACTS IN APRIL 2020 VERSUS JANUARY 2021

As the COVID-19 pandemic has now lasted an entire year, we wanted to see how participants felt one year into the pandemic relative to how they felt at the outset. There were no notable differences in the demographics between the 2020 and 2021 survey participants in terms of melanoma type, stage of treatment, treatment type, and resident province. Across the time periods, the delays in different kinds of medical care (2020: question 5, 2021: question 7) and access to healthcare providers (2020: question 6, 2021: question 8) are consistent. In question 7/9, the 2021 survey participants reported a higher level of interruption in their oncology care than they expected in the 2020 survey. Thankfully, question 10 in the 2020 survey and 13 in the 2021 survey demonstrated that survey participants have found fewer difficulties in receiving drug therapy and treatments than they anticipated in 2020, and participants are feeling a significant increase in trust in their healthcare team (questions 13/16).

A consistent number of participants are receiving, or being offered, telephone or virtual appointments across both surveys (questions 8/10), and in 2021 more participants found these to be an appropriate substitute than in 2020 (questions 9/11).

In the mental wellness category, the contrasting results from the 2020 and 2021 surveys, questions 14 and 17 respectively, demonstrated that there has been a decrease in stress over the course of the pandemic, likely a consequence of participants adjusting to life in the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, questions 16/19, which asked participants how COVID-19 has affected their quality of life in a variety of areas, saw participants reporting a decrease in difficulty across all areas. In 2020 and 2021, survey participants have been having the same amounts of difficulty keeping in contact with friends and family (questions 19/23).

In terms of food and transportation access there have been some improvements. In particular, food delivery has become significantly more accessible for survey participants, as evidenced by their responses to question 17 in the 2020 survey and 20 in the 2021 survey. Relative to the 2020 survey, transportation access has stayed the same in 2021 (questions 18/21).

Overall, these results show that while there have been more interruptions in medical care than survey participants initially expected, people have adjusted to the pandemic, and factors such as stress levels, food access, and trust in their medical team have positively changed.