GLOBAL SURVEY of 104 cancer patient organisations reveals devastating impact of COVID-19

BACKGROUND

The Global Cancer Coalitions Network (GCCN), established in May 2020, collectively represents over 750 cancer patient organisations representing over 14 million patients around the world. Cancer services have faced challenges as a result of COVID-19, including suspension of screening and diagnostic services; delays in diagnosis leading to higher mortality rates; cancellation/deferral of life-saving treatments; changes in treatment regimens and suspension of vital research. Substantial increases in the rates; cancellation/deferral of services; delays in diagnosis of screening and diagnostic COVID-19, including suspension challenges as a result of. Cancer services have faced amongst cancer patients is worse than ever. The Global Cancer Coalitions

METHODS

A global cancer survey was conducted involving 104 cancer patient organisations from 46 countries representing advanced breast, bladder, colorectal, lymphoma, ovarian, and pancreatic cancer patient groups. Among 104 organisations from 46 countries representing advanced breast, bladder, colorectal, lymphoma, ovarian, and pancreatic cancer patient groups.

RESULTS

Despite some improvements in access to screening, diagnostic and treatment services in the year to December 2020, levels of stress, anxiety, depression, isolation and financial hardship amongst cancer patients is worse than ever. Calls/emails have fluctuated to the waves of the pandemic, but responses are "worse than ever" for patients related to COVID-19 and psychosocial issues dominate. Almost all organisations rely on volunteers.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Organisations have faced a perilous year financially. 67.4% have experienced a fall in income in the twelve months to December 2020; more respondents report services are "worse than ever" for patients as a result of COVID-19. One third are run solely by volunteers (31%).

CONCLUSIONS

For organisations providing support to cancer patients, declining income, the need to reduce staff and move to virtual working practices has added strain while demand for support due to the pandemic has increased. Over 1 in 10 organisations have closed temporarily, and some permanently. Half do not have access to any national funding schemes. One in six (14.3%) expect their income to fall even further, by another 35% on average.