



The following summarizes key findings from the national online survey of 202 cancer patients, survivors and caregivers (137 interviews with cancer patients and survivors; 65 interviews with caregivers of cancer patients and survivors). Respondents were recruited for participation from several cancer support list serves. The study was conducted from May 3rd through May 21st.

While a margin of error cannot be calculated from studies using non-random online panels, the margin of error for the overall study would have been $\pm 6.9\%$ at the 95% confidence level if it had been conducted from a random telephone sample ($\pm 8\%$ for cancer patients and survivors; $\pm 11.4\%$ for caregivers).

Key Findings:

- **Caregivers – particularly spouses or partners – are important and frequently needed sources of support for cancer patients and survivors.**
 - More than nine out of 10 cancer patients and survivors (90%) report receiving assistance from a caregiver during their cancer experience. In fact, a majority of those with caregiver assistance report receiving assistance from 2 or more people (58%), compared to 42% who relied on only one caregiver.
 - Of those receiving assistance, 68% percent say their *primary* caretaker is a spouse or partner, followed by 9% who cite a child and 8% who cite a parent as their primary caregiver.
- **And caregiver support is a constant and longer-term commitment.**
 - Nearly three-quarters of those cancer patients and survivors receiving assistance from a caregiver report the support is on a daily basis (73%), with an additional 16% who say they receive support 3 or more times a week. Just 12% say they received assistance 1 or 2 times a week or less.
 - Further, 92% of caregivers report being a caregiver for 6 months or more, including 58% who have been a caregiver for a year or more.
- **Cancer survivors and caregivers overwhelmingly agree that the support of caregivers allows the focus to remain on the treatment – and that caregivers are critical to treatment decision-making.**
 - Eight in ten cancer patients and survivors and caregivers agree that patients were able to focus on their treatment because their caregiver took on additional responsibilities (85% of caregivers; 85% of cancer patients and survivors – including 55% of patients and survivors who agree *strongly*).
 - Further, three quarters agree that the caregiver was instrumental in their treatment decisions (72% of caregivers; 72% of cancer patients and survivors – including 46% who agree *strongly*).

- **Caregivers provide support in a variety of ways. Primary support areas for caregivers include providing emotional support, transportation and household chores.**

- Cancer patients and survivors and caregivers outlined the following caregiver roles in their own experiences:

	Cancer Patients/ Survivors	Caregivers
<i>% Complete/Significant/Some Involvement</i>		
Providing emotional support	93% (58% complete involvement)	100% (69% complete involvement)
Providing transportation	92% (33% complete involvement)	84% (39% complete involvement)
Preparing meals	88% (26% complete involvement)	90% (36% complete involvement)
Performing household chores	86% (28% complete involvement)	95% (37% complete involvement)
Providing financial assistance	68% (39% complete involvement)	59% (23% complete involvement)
Managing or overseeing finances	57% (32% complete involvement)	70% (33% complete involvement)

- **Caregiver stress is often hidden from others. Cancer patients and survivors are divided as to whether their caregivers regularly experienced distress – but caregivers report a high level of personal stress.**

- Nearly half of cancer patients and survivors believe their caretakers felt regular distress during their cancer experience (49%), while 45% do not believe their caretakers suffered regular distress. In contrast, 80% of caregivers say they personally experienced regular stress and anxiety throughout the cancer experience. Just 15% of caregivers say they did not experience regular distress.

- Further, caregivers are just as likely to report being treated for depression and anxiety as cancer patients and survivors. More than 3 in 10 cancer patients and survivors report being treated for depression (34%) and anxiety (37%) during their cancer experience, nearly equal to the number of caregivers seeking treatment (29% for depression; 31% for anxiety).

- **Further, caregivers are much more likely to experience stress from “feeling alone” and “maintaining a strong front” than even cancer patients and survivors realize.**

- Cancer patients and survivors believe the most stressful aspects for their caregivers were general anxiety or nervousness. In contrast, caregivers rate feeling alone and maintaining a strong front at the top of their stress list.

- Rankings for the most stressful aspect (rating 1 of the top 3) for caregivers are as follows:

	Cancer Patients/ Survivors	Caregivers
--	---------------------------------------	-------------------

	Survivors	
	% Ranked 1 of top 3 most stressful aspects for the caregiver	
Anxiety and nervousness	49%	48%
Maintaining a strong front	41%	56%
Financial burden	31%	7%
Depression	31%	29%
Sleep deprivation	19%	20%
Lack of personal time	18%	18%
Feeling alone	7%	51%
Did not observe/have any caregiver stress	48%	31%

- **The impact of the cancer experience on caregivers' own lives may also be underestimated. While cancer survivors and caregivers acknowledge a number of personal difficulties for caregivers, caregivers are much more likely to cite personal impacts.**

Rankings for the degree of difficulty caregivers faced in various areas are as follows:

	Cancer Patients/ Survivors	Caregivers
	% Extremely/Very/Somewhat difficult for caregivers	
Personal routines	47% (53% not too or not at all difficult)	84% (16% not too or not at all difficult)
Friendships	31% (69% not too or not at all difficult)	73% (27% not too or not at all difficult)
Physical health	28% (72% not too or not at all difficult)	80% (20% not too or not at all difficult)
Career	27% (73% not too or not at all difficult)	73% (27% not too or not at all difficult)
Family relationships	28% (72% not too or not at all difficult)	50% (50% not too or not at all difficult)
Financial status	23% (77% not too or not at all difficult)	40% (46% not too or not at all difficult)
Emotional stability	N/A	87% (13% not too or not at all difficult)

Findings are from a national online survey conducted by The Wellness Community, in consultation with KRC Research, of 202 cancer patients, survivors and caregivers (137 interviews with cancer patients and survivors; 65 interviews with caregivers of cancer patients and survivors). Respondents were recruited for participation from several cancer support list serves. The study was conducted from May 3-21, 2007.