

Enhancing Person-Centred Breast Cancer Care: Evaluating Information and Support Needs



Breast Cancer Network Australia



Background

The Australian Cancer Plan (ACP) recognises that enhancing person-centred care includes the provision of information and support.¹ Consumers – people affected by breast cancer – need access to timely and reliable information tailored to their needs so that they can make informed decisions about their treatment and care. Healthcare professionals (HCPs) play a key role in communicating information to patients. This requires them to have access to resources that reflect the changing needs of patients and support them to deliver optimal and person-centred care.²

Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) develops and provides evidence-based information and support services for people affected by breast cancer and HCPs that care for them to help ensure delivery of optimal breast cancer care to all Australians. BCNA harnesses the voices, experience and perspectives of people with lived experience and Australian HCPs to continuously enhance its information and support resources.

Aim

The BCNA Experience research project aimed to understand:

- emerging changes to the way people seek information and support from BCNA, especially since COVID-19
- whether information resources are still meeting the needs of members, including being accessible and relevant, especially for different communities and groups, such as people living with metastatic breast cancer and people living with a disability
- how BCNA's role in the cancer sector is perceived so that we can continue to advocate for improvements to cancer care, build confidence and connection across our member networks, and support health professionals to tailor health services to the needs of each patient and their family.

Methods

The research was conducted in two phases;

- (1) a co-design approach through workshops with lived experience BCNA consumers and HCPs to iteratively inform and develop both surveys (Refer to poster #49 "Understanding the value of codesign: exploring participant experiences")
- (2) national dissemination of the cross-sectional online surveys to BCNA members with a diagnosis of breast cancer who have engaged with BCNA within the last 5 years and HCPs working in breast cancer. This was the first time BCNA has invited feedback from HCPs across the breast cancer sector.

The surveys were each open and collected response for five weeks. Quantitative data was analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative survey data were analysed using a content analysis approach.

Results

Respondents

More than 2,500 members and almost 170 HCPs responded to the two national surveys

- > 50% of respondents to the HCP survey were nurses
- There were no respondents from General Practitioners (GPs)
- 57% of member reported being referred to BCNA via their healthcare team, especially breast cancer nurses.
- When asked why they referred patients to BCNA Information resources and support services, HCP respondents indicated they are easy to access (77%) and understand (73%), are up to date (71%), comprehensive (66.7%), evidence based (77%) and trustworthy for patients (79%).

BCNA information and support services

- Member and HCP reported a lack of awareness of the scope of information and support the BCNA provide .
- 86% of nurses agreed that BCNA information and support services enhances patient experience.
- HCPs are open to greater engagement with BCNA and participating in BCNA professional development activities but are unsure what opportunities are available

Optimal Care Pathways (OCPs)

Awareness of the Optimal Care Pathway clinical guidelines for cancer care is varied amongst HCPs and this impacts and influences the care delivered.

- 68% of nurses indicated awareness and expressed confidence in the effectiveness of the OCPs

What we heard from you

1. Membership profile is similar to last member survey in 2017

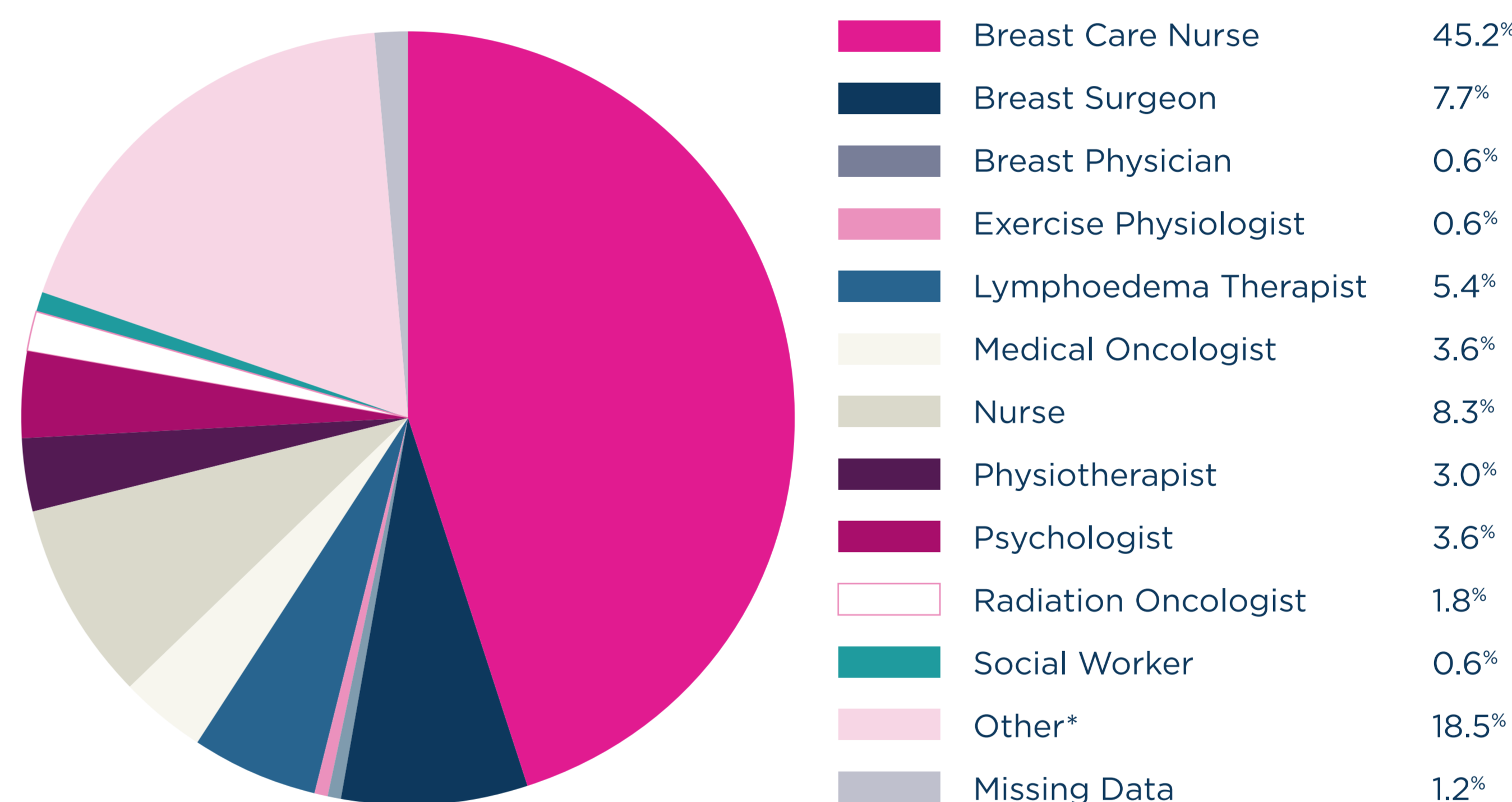
2. Brand is strong but profile in community could be improved

3. Unmet supportive care needs continue long term

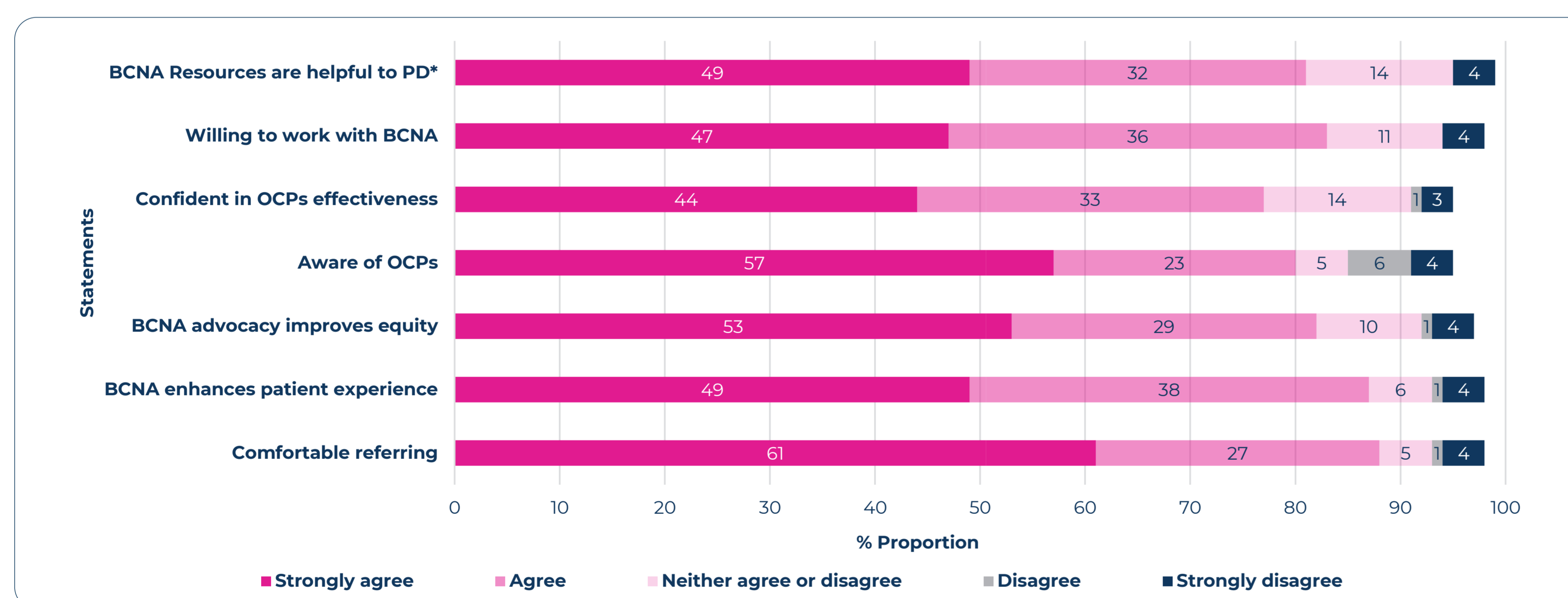
4. Members & health professionals have high trust but low awareness

5. Priority groups seeking more tailored information & support

Healthcare professional respondents



Agreement with BCNA values and Best Practices (Nurses)



"...whenever you have a concern or need information BCNA always has a resource that you need. It gives you access to a community of others experiencing what you're experiencing; and up to date information on treatments and resources to use to navigate the many decisions you're faced with" (Respondent 112)

Discussion

HCPs play key roles in the timely dissemination and communication of information to patients, however there is increasing pressure on the cancer workforce. This research indicates that strengthened engagement and partnerships between BCNA and HCPs, particularly nurses, could help to address common barriers to optimal care for breast cancer consumers. Collaboration will support people affected by breast cancer to navigate the health system and improve equitable access to the right support and information at the right time for them.

Findings from this project that BCNA will be exploring are:

- Increase promotion about the extensive range of BCNA information and support service.
- Work with HCPs to improve their use of BCNA resources and how to deliver optimal care.
- Build awareness across HCP networks about BCNA's supportive care resources.
- Repeat the surveys in 2-3 years to assess increased use and access of resources by members and health professionals.
- Work with government to evaluate how Optimal Care Pathways (OCPs) support better patient care experiences and outcomes.

Healthcare Professionals can sign up to BCNA's Health Professional Newsletter by scanning the QR Code opposite, to remain updated about BCNA activities and impact, and information tailored to HCPs.



References:

1. Cancer Australia 2023, Australian Cancer Plan: Enhanced Consumer Experience, Australian Government, Canberra. <https://www.australiacancerplan.gov.au/so/enhanced-consumer-experience>
2. Cancer Council Victoria and Department of Health Victoria 2021, Optimal care pathway for people with breast cancer, 2nd edn, Cancer Council Victoria, Melbourne. <https://www.cancer.org.au/assets/pdf/breast-cancer-2nd-edition>

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