The nutrition support needs of cancer survivors in Ireland

Dr Claire M Timon Centre for eIntegrated Care, Dublin City University.
Dr Suzanne Doyle School of Biological & Health Sciences, Technological University Dublin.

Introduction
Cancer patients and survivors face several challenges relating to diet including misinformation about diet and cancer and a reported lack of availability of professional dietary advice (1). This research aims to investigate the type of nutrition support received, current dietary habits and preferred nutrition support going forward amongst cancer survivors in Ireland.

Methods
An online survey exploring the nutrition support needs of cancer survivors in Ireland was developed using LimeSurvey. Eligibility criteria included that respondents were: ≥18yrs, living in Ireland, and ≥1 year post primary cancer treatment. To date 76 respondents have completed the survey.

Key results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Need for nutrition support</th>
<th>Dietary advice</th>
<th>Future nutrition support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- 89% (n=68) of respondents were female</td>
<td>- 74% (n=56) have not received nutrition support since treatment ceased</td>
<td>- All (n=20) respondents that received dietary advice were advised to follow a healthy balanced diet</td>
<td>- 66% (n=50) found information in the format of books/leaflets useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 63% (n=48) received third level education</td>
<td>- 58% (n=44) aged between 45 and 64 years</td>
<td>- 65% (n=13) advised to avoid sweets/chocolate</td>
<td>- 88% (n=67) preferred the idea of an interactive online tool for the provision of support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig 1: Key results from the nutrition support needs of cancer survivors in Ireland survey

Conclusion
This research highlights the challenges facing cancer survivors in Ireland and provides useful insight into how nutrition support services could help address their needs.