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Examining Use of Advance Directives by Oncology Patients

TOPIC

Palliative Care Delivery/Operations: Approaches to palliative care delivery for specific population types

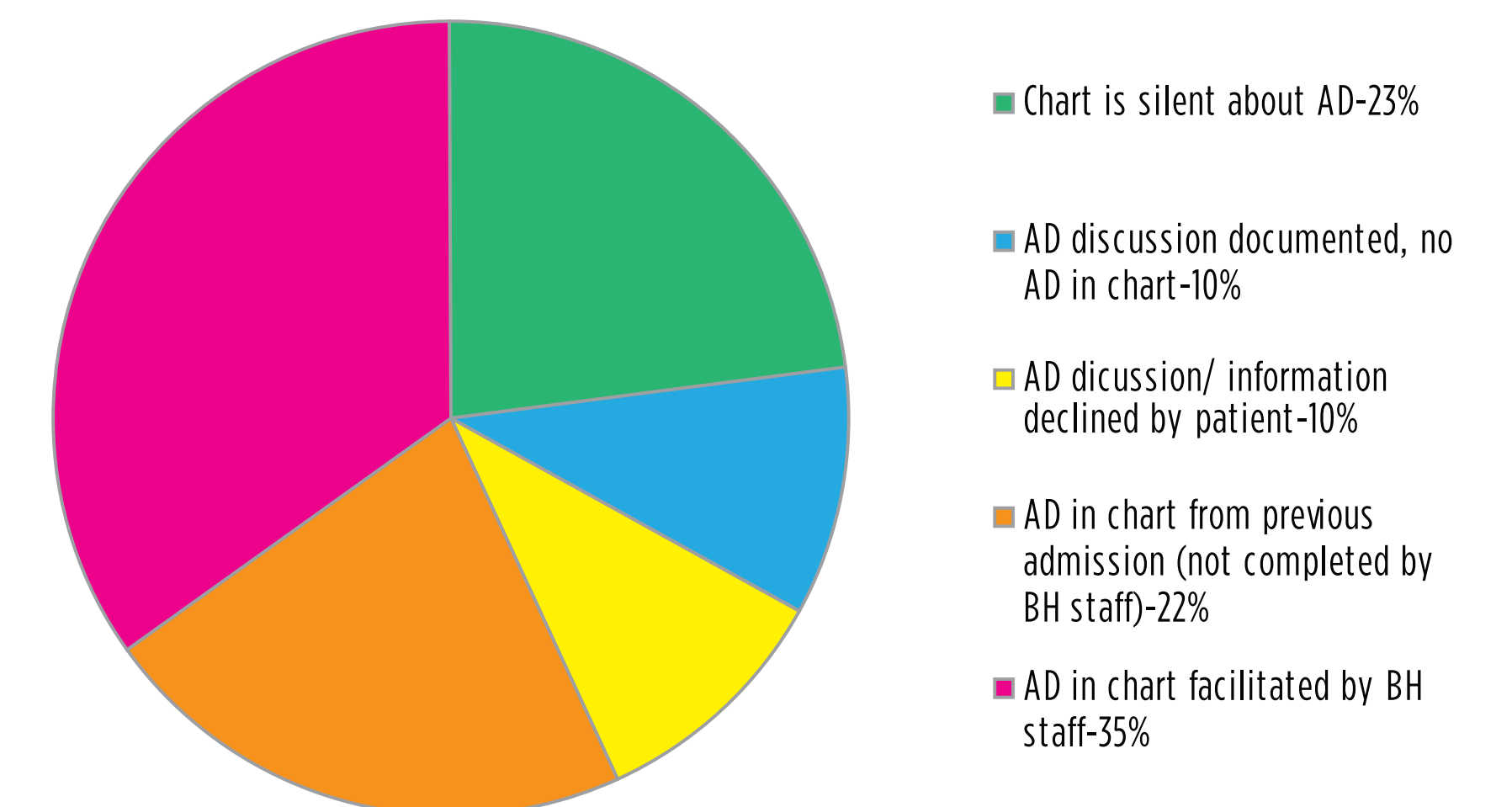
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

According to the Centers for Disease Control, 88% of hospice patients have advance directives. Other published survey results show that older people and those with chronic diseases are more likely to have advance directives.

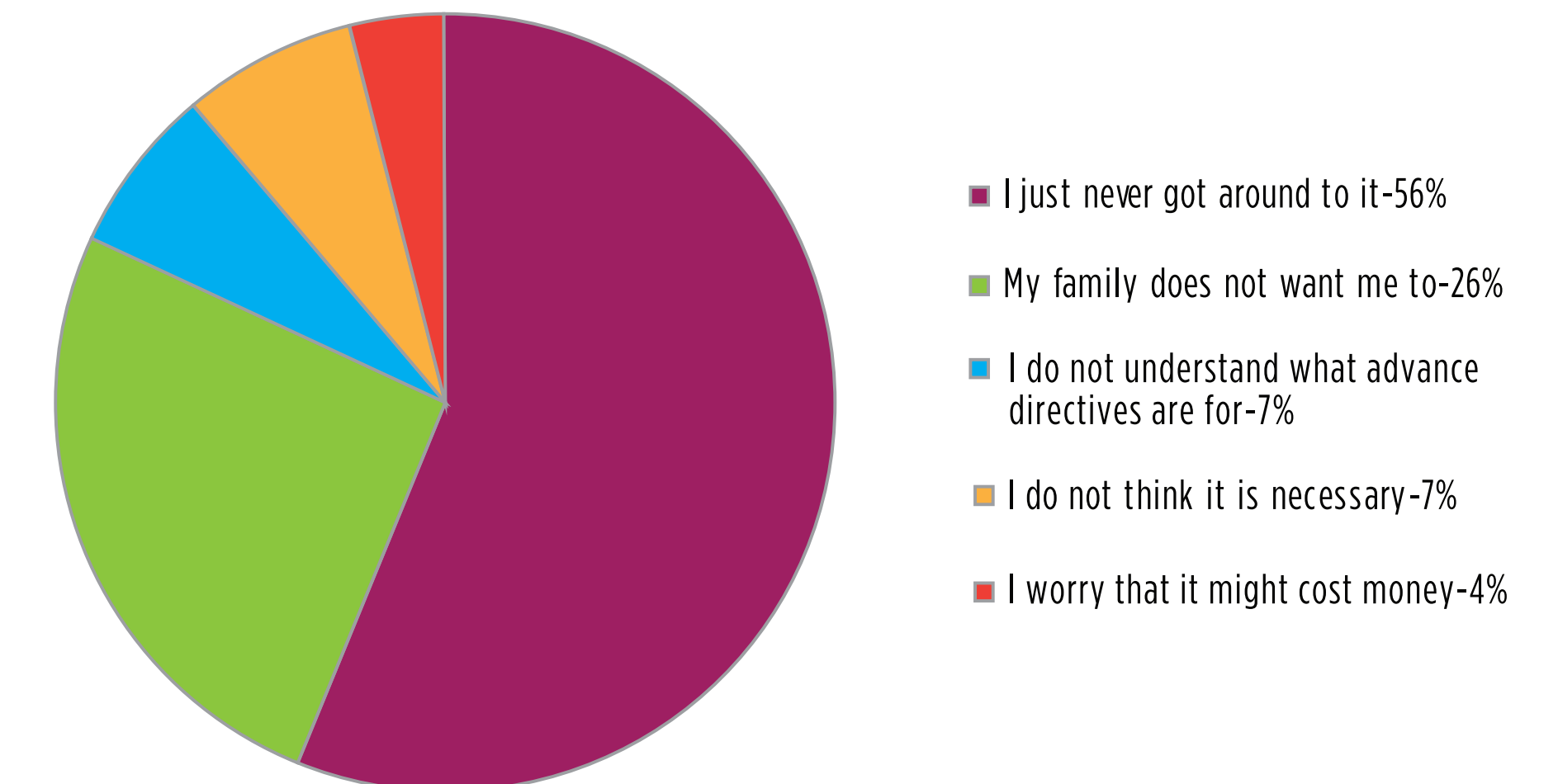
In our comprehensive community cancer center, a retrospective chart review of stage III & IV lung cancer patients was conducted, examining the use of advance directives. The results revealed that only 57% of those patients had completed an advance directive. In almost one quarter of cases, the chart was silent about documented directives. Twenty percent of these patients received a palliative care consult. This prompted our team to seek more information about lack of advance care planning among our patients with this serious illness. In order to assess possible barriers, a survey was compiled to inquire about roadblocks.

The survey was designed listing twelve possible reasons why a person might not have an advance directive. One of the reasons was left blank to allow the person to write in his/her own reason. Patients in the radiation oncology clinic were asked if they had an advance directive. If they did not, they were asked to select one reason from the survey list that best fit their reason for not having one. The patient survey was given to 50 patients over the course of six months.

AD IN STAGE III AND IV LUNG CANCER PATIENTS



ADVANCE DIRECTIVES BARRIERS



SUMMARY

Patients who answered the survey question with one of the last 3 answers were given advance directive information and education.

In order to address the most common response to the survey, our Cancer Committee has taken the following steps:

- Three community presentations have been conducted on advance directives, in which participants may complete their own document following an educational talk. An additional seminar is scheduled before the end of 2015.
- Advance directives are now included in all new patient packets in the oncology department.
- The Palliative Care MSW intern will conduct a needs assessment in the spring of 2016 to further assess the advance directives process and possible roadblocks in our organization.