

Cancer and depression project: a patient perspective

Project summary

Background: Cancer patients with a pre-existing depression diagnosis also face significant challenges. Cancer can be poorly treated or overlooked, with the symptoms misattributed as an expression of the mental disorder due to ignorance, stigma or discrimination. Their cancer diagnosis and side-effects of treatment also often lead to a worsening of depressive symptoms, which is often not adequately addressed.

Objectives: These are to:

- A) Raise awareness on the issue of depressions as a cancer co-morbidity.
- B) Gather in-depth patient accounts on the issue of co-morbidity
- C) Gather information from relevant stakeholders, such as patients, carers, clinicians, researchers and EU and national policy makers regarding the challenges of comorbidity (such as, difficulties in detection and diagnosis of depression in cancer patients and vice versa).
- D) Encourage a dialogue between patients, clinicians and other stakeholders to be used as a basis for policy recommendations for EU and national policy makers.

Methods: In collaboration with the European Cancer Patient Coalition the following will be carried out:

- Organise 2 workshops with patients, carers, clinicians, researchers and EU and national policy makers in an exploration of the challenges of the co-occurrence of cancer and depression.
- Produce factsheets and infographics with policy recommendations. The factsheet will be disseminated to key stakeholders and as part of the European-wide social media campaign.

Timeline for workshops:

Workshop 1 – patient and carers – 2nd half of Sept 2022

Workshop 2 – clinicians and other stakeholders – end of Nov 2022