

CANCER & COVID-19 IN INDIA

ASSESSING THE IMPACT IN A NATIONWIDE SURVEY



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INTRODUCTION

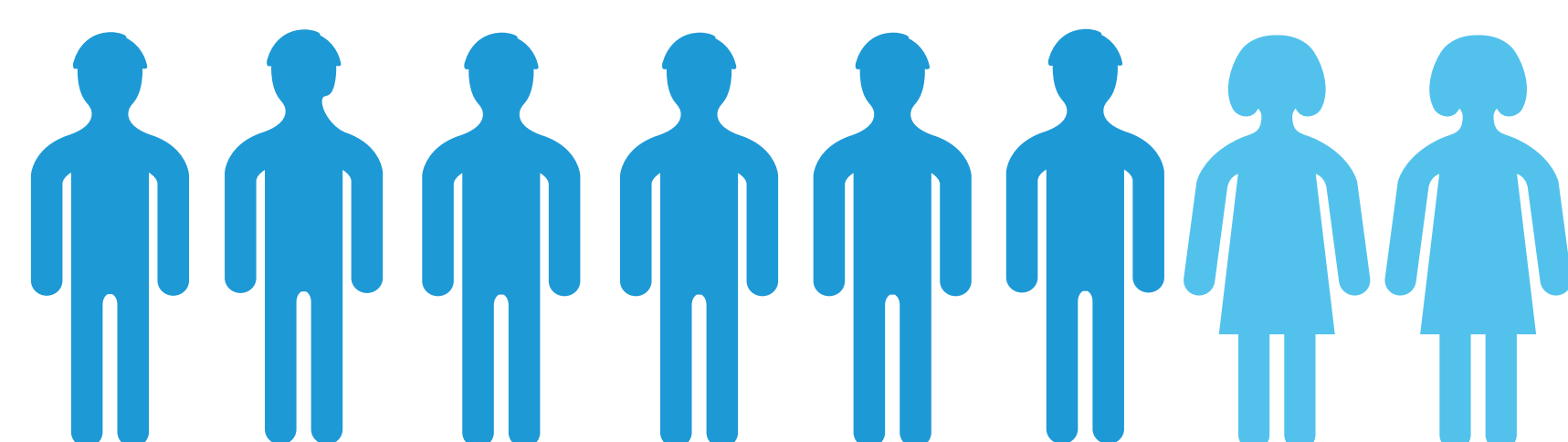
- The impact of COVID-19 has been concerning in the management of non-COVID diseases, especially cancer.
- We conducted an online survey to study the impact COVID-19 had on cancer-related care.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

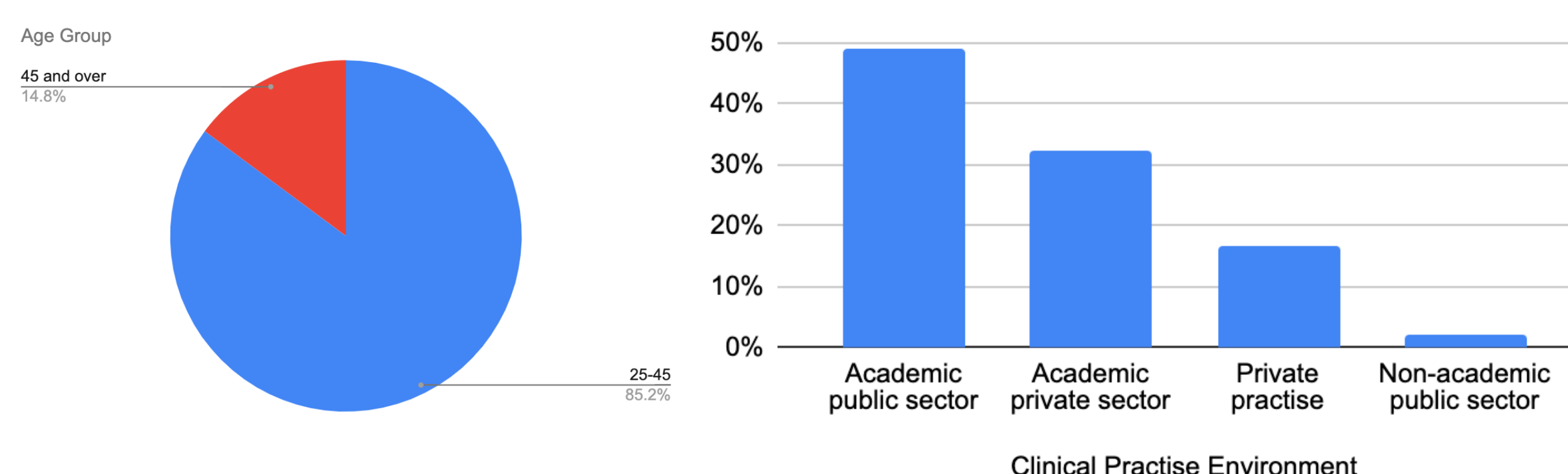
To understand the impact of COVID-19 on cancer-related treatments and its effect on healthcare professionals in India.

- The survey was conducted in collaboration with OncoAlert between March 2022 and June 2022.
- Google forms were used to collect the data and were mainly circulated through the ONCOassist app and other social platforms including emails to various oncology-related specialties.
- The survey consisted of 31 questions including demographics, career-related, and direct questions involving the practice and opinion on telehealth in Oncology.

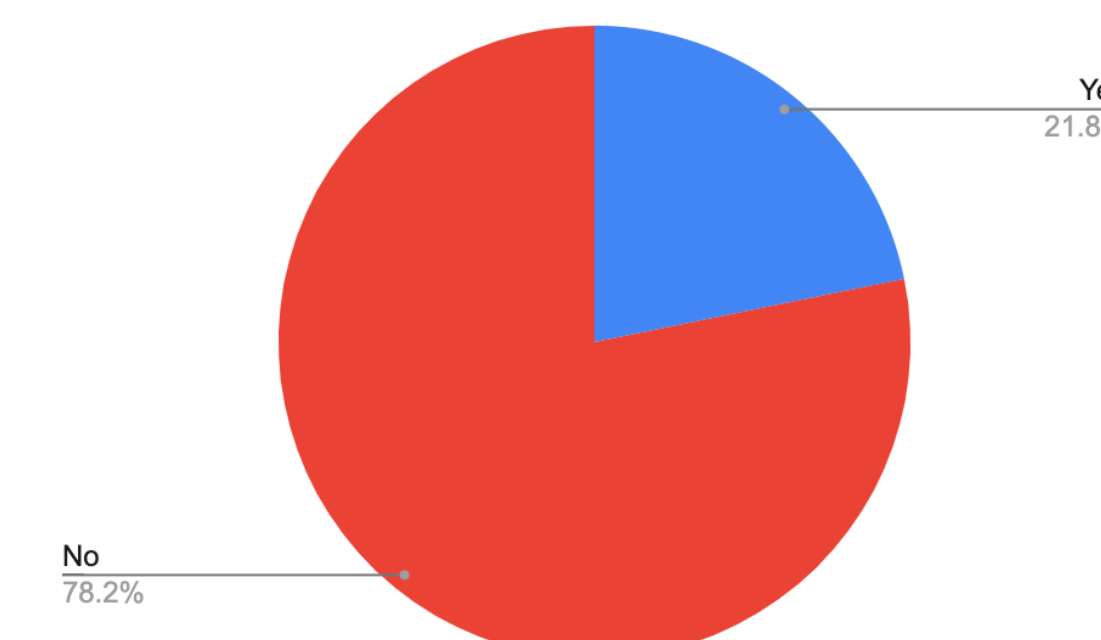
PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS



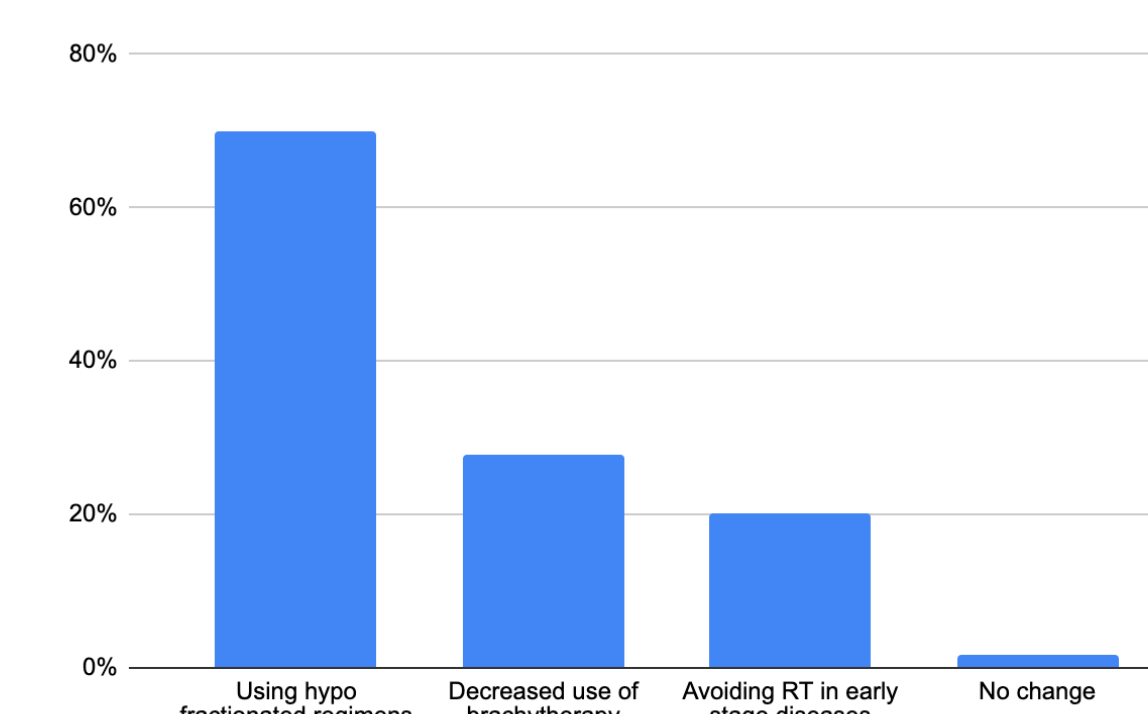
The majority were males (71%) who were relatively young (85.1% were in the age group 25-45 years).



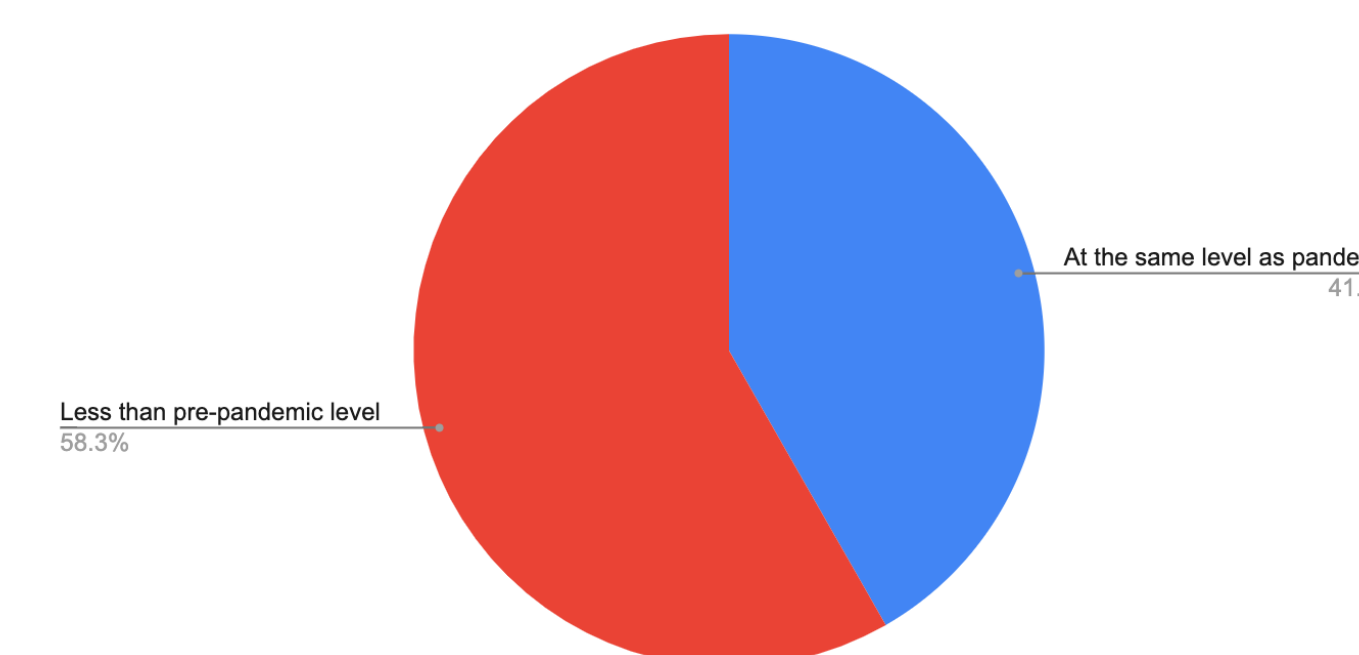
Did you make a change in curative intent therapy (radiation/surgery)?



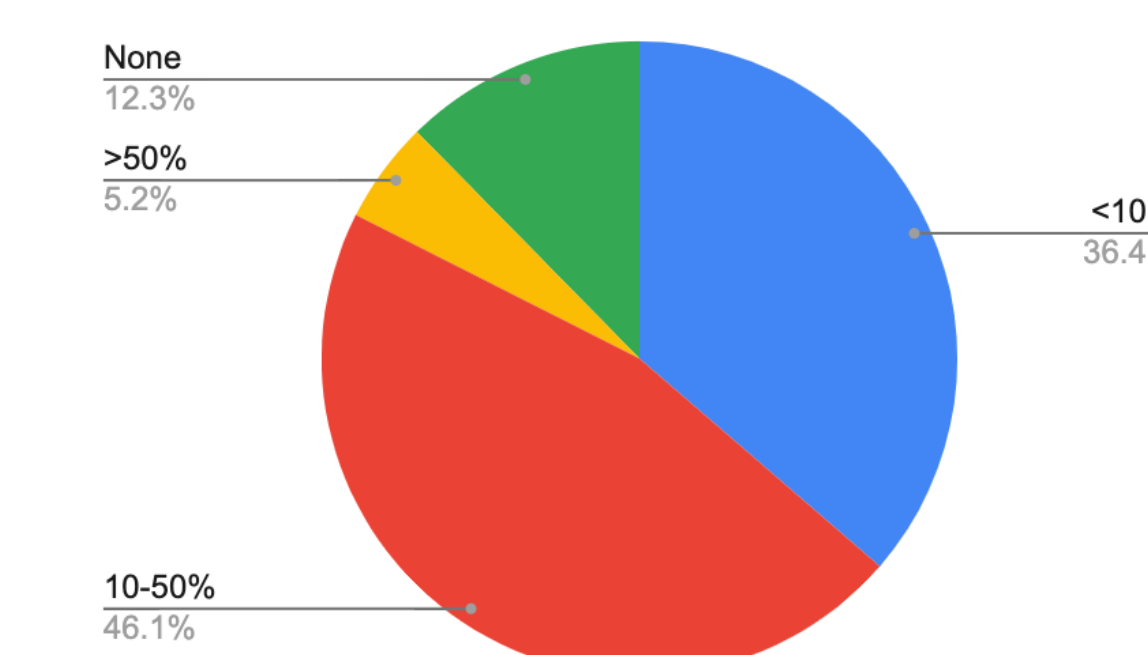
What are the changes you have made to radiotherapy practice?



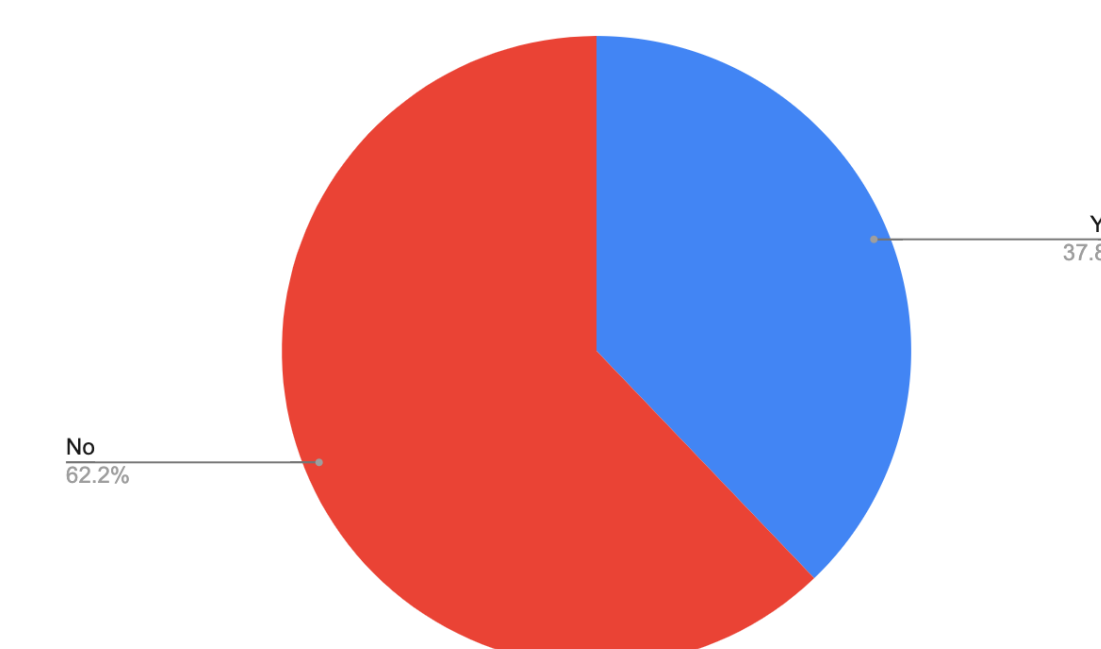
Did you deliver palliative intent therapy?



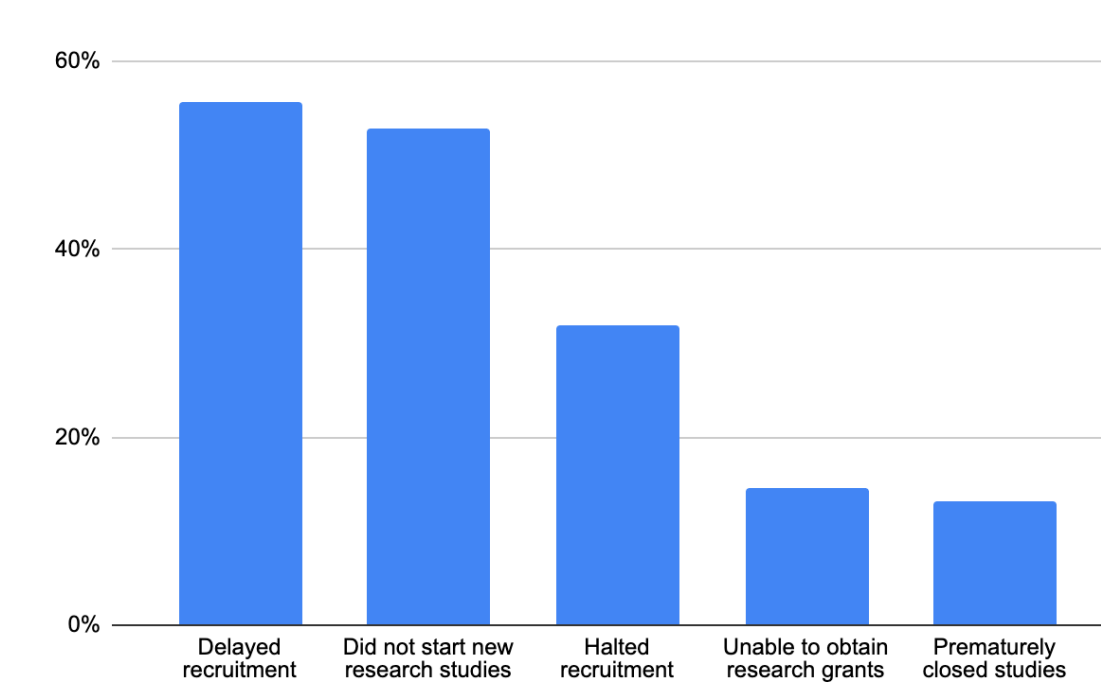
What proportion of your cancer patients were managed by some form of telemedicine?



Did you face any pay cuts as fewer cancer patients were visiting your clinic for treatment?



Were your research studies affected?



RESULTS

- The online questionnaire was completed by 155 respondents.
- About 3/4th of the centers admitted COVID patients in their centers and 81% believed cancer care was hampered due to the pandemic.
- About 79% provided telemedicine facilities and 19% conveyed that more than 25% of cancer patients were managed by this facility.
- COVID testing was done before starting therapy with 65%, 55%, and 52% sharing the need for the test prior to surgery, chemotherapy, or the start of radiation therapy respectively.
- Only 11% felt the need to deviate from the standard of care more than 50% of the time.
- The majority (75%) felt there was a delay in diagnosis and 82% and 80% felt there was progression to advanced stages or patients were lost to follow-up respectively.
- About 57% felt that they provided substandard treatment to their patients.
- About 23%, 11%, and 14% felt that more than 50% of surgeries, chemotherapy, and radiation treatment needed to be canceled.
- Unfortunately, 22% reported having to make changes in the curative intent of treatment.
- In only about 1/4th of the cases the PG/DM exams were held in person and on -time
- 60% of healthcare professionals had tested positive for COVID-19 out of which 56% had contracted the disease during the third wave and 27% were affected with COVID-19 more than once.
- About 60% have used the Oncoassist mobile application for more than a year.

CONCLUSION

Decision-making in oncology has been influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Telehealth is a novel concept that is being encouraged and used by clinicians to improve patient care.