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## Supportive care experiences of people diagnosed with pancreatic, oesophageal and stomach cancers

### Background

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People with pancreatic, oesophageal and stomach cancer have a range of symptoms, issues and concerns that can impact their day to day life. Support is available to help patients and their carers manage these symptoms, issues and concerns and can be provided by a range of health services and professionals including general practitioners, dieticians, psycho-oncologists, physiotherapists, palliative care specialists and social workers.

### What did we want to achieve?

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We wanted to understand the experiences of people with pancreatic, oesophageal and stomach cancers accessing and using supportive care services available in Victoria to help them manage their symptoms, issues and concerns. This will help to inform what actions should be taken in the future to improve access to, usage and usefulness of Victorian supportive care services.



### What was involved?

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Interviews were undertaken with people who had been diagnosed with, or cared for someone who had been diagnosed with, pancreatic, oesophageal or stomach cancer, lived in Victoria during their treatment and were at least 18 years of age.

### What were the findings?

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We spoke to 30 people with pancreatic, oesophageal and stomach cancers and 11 carers. Participants wanted more support for their symptoms and issues across their cancer journey, particularly for diet-related issues, pain and fatigue. Carers wanted more support for how to properly care for the patient at home as well as access to psychological support services. Those who recounted the most positive supportive care experiences, generally had access to palliative care and/or a cancer care coordinator.



### What is the impact?

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People diagnosed with pancreatic, oesophageal and stomach cancers and their carers want more high-quality support, from a range of health professionals, throughout their cancer journey. Policies and services should promote access to supportive care for all patients.

The **full article** for this study is available to freely download from the *BMC Health Services Research* website: <https://bmchealthservres.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12913-022-07625-y>

If you would like more information on **cancer support services** please refer to the following websites:

- WeCan: <https://wecan.org.au/>
- Cancer Council Victoria: <https://www.cancervic.org.au/get-support>
- Pancare: <https://www.pancare.org.au/>