Changes in diet following a cancer diagnosis in Scotland.

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Changes in diet following a cancer diagnosis in Scotland

Lindsey Masson
Dimitra Verra
Hollie Cumming
Hayleigh Cameron
Emily Robinson

School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences
Age-standardised relative survival at 5 y after diagnosis
(Patients aged 15-99y, diagnosed 1987-2011/2)
Aims & objectives

**Aim**
To assess diet and attitudes towards diet in cancer survivors in Scotland.

**Objectives**
- To assess changes in diet after first cancer diagnosis.
- To determine what information about diet was received or obtained after first cancer diagnosis.
- To explore attitudes towards current diet.
- To explore barriers to improving the diet of cancer survivors.
CLAN Cancer Support

CLAN Haven – affordable B&B accommodation

Support groups
Salon service
Library & info service
Children & families service
Complementary therapies
Social & wellbeing activities
Emotional support & counselling
Methods

☐ M&F aged 18+ years who had received a diagnosis of cancer and used CLAN Cancer Support in Aberdeen.

☒ BMI <18.5 kg/m² or following specific dietary advice from their doctor or dietitian.

☑ Questionnaires distributed in March 2015 and March 2016 to CLAN users by post (randomly selected), at organised events, and via CLAN volunteers.

☑ Approved by RGU School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences Ethics Review Committee.
# Participant characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>56.8</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group (years)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75+</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.1</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BMI group (kg/m²)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18.5 - 24.99</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.0 - 29.99</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.0 - 34.99</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.0 - 39.99</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.0+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First cancer diagnosis</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999 or earlier</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000 - 2002</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 - 2005</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 - 2008</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 - 2011</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 - 2014</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 - 2016</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17.6</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First cancer diagnosed</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breast</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myeloma</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostate</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidney</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Red meat & battered fish

- Red meat: 27.0%
- Processed meat: 36.5%
- Fried fish in batter: 17.6%

Legend:
- Green: Decreased
- Orange: No change
- Red: Increased
- Gray: Missing
Biscuits & cakes

- Buns, sweet pastries, scones, flapjacks, croissants, doughnuts: 25.7%
- Cakes: 23.0%
- Plain biscuits: 20.3%
- Sweet biscuits & chocolate biscuits: 29.7%

The chart indicates the percentage decrease or increase in consumption.
Confectionery, crisps & soft drinks

- Regular fizzy soft drinks: 21.6%
- Crisps or other packet snacks: 28.4%
- Sweets, toffees, mints: 23.0%
- Chocolates and chocolate bars: 29.7%

Legend:
- Decreased
- No change
- Increased
- Missing
Only **31.1%** reported receiving or obtaining information about diet after their first cancer diagnosis.

The most common sources of information were:
- Dietitian (13.5%)
- Internet (9.5%)
- Information leaflets (8.1%)
- Books (6.8%)
- Newspaper/magazines (6.8%)
- Nutritionist (6.8%)
- Nutritional therapist (1.4%)
Attitudes towards current diet

I would consider improving my diet
- Strongly disagree: 16.2%
- Disagree: 47.3%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 28.4%
- Agree: 6.8%
- Strongly agree: 14.9%
- Missing: 0%

It is important for me to follow a healthy diet
- Strongly disagree: 6.8%
- Disagree: 40.5%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 48.6%
- Agree: 4.5%
- Strongly agree: 14.9%
- Missing: 0%

I am satisfied with my current diet
- Strongly disagree: 5.4%
- Disagree: 14.9%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 10.8%
- Agree: 48.6%
- Strongly agree: 14.9%
- Missing: 0%

My diet is healthy
- Strongly disagree: 13.5%
- Disagree: 21.6%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 43.2%
- Agree: 48.6%
- Strongly agree: 16.2%
- Missing: 0%
1. Diseases, intolerances and medicines that affect appetite, taste, food choice, portion size and eating patterns.

2. Difficulty avoiding certain factors.

3. Providing meals suitable for the whole family.

4. Difficulty resisting foods that they enjoy eating.

“My diet is a result of my cancer diagnosis. I am a prisoner of this disease.” P10

“Supermarkets have improved selection of food available, however these are laden with preservatives which I avoid.” P34

“Trying to find meals the whole family will enjoy which are healthy” P5

“I love chocolate and sweeties!” P65
Barriers to improving diet: key themes

5. Not liking certain foods.
   “I hate fish but eat it twice a week.” P10

6. Lack of time and/or energy.
   “Knowledge of cooking is lacking also knowledge of nutrition is poor and finding it hard to find correct info, lots of confusing info online” P2

7. Lack of cooking and/or nutrition knowledge.

8. Cost.
   “As I am single and was made unemployed by my cancer I could not afford certain foods” P64

9. Living alone and cooking for one.
Conclusions

- Individuals may make positive changes to their diet following a cancer diagnosis.

- Survivors may be receptive to recommendations to further improve their diet.

- Further research is needed to understand:
  - How best to deliver dietary advice to affect behaviour change.
  - The role that local charities can make in supporting cancer survivors to make healthier dietary choices.
Acknowledgements

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