

# ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY CANCER CENTERS

## Geriatric Assessment Performance in Community Cancer Centers: Trends, Barriers, and Recommendations

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### INTRODUCTION

Addressing the needs of older adults with cancer is critical for the delivery of high-quality, patient-centered care. The Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC) has identified barriers and best practices for serving this growing patient population in order to help support the multidisciplinary team in understanding and performing this type of care.

### METHODS

An expert advisory committee was formed. An online survey was administered to 332 cancer professionals from various locations (differing size and region). Three multidisciplinary, in-depth focus groups were conducted at exceptional programs with established geriatric oncology protocols.

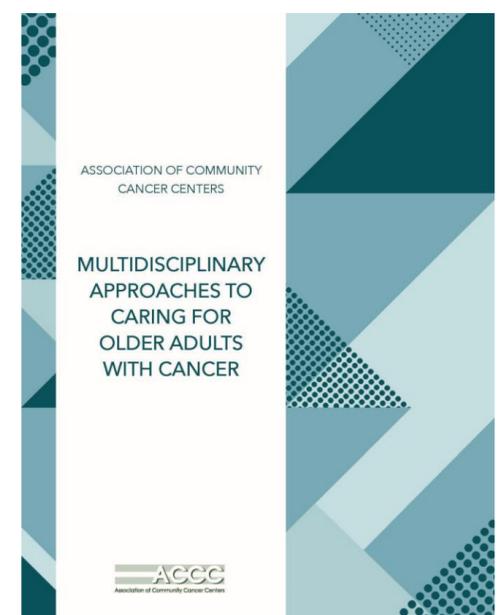
### RESULTS

95% of survey respondents agreed that their older adult patients would benefit from a comprehensive geriatric assessment (CGA), yet only 17% are performing CGAs. Top barriers to this were time/personnel and familiarity with validated tools. Techniques for evaluating fitness, cognitive status, psychological status, comorbidities, and toxicity risk were often informal. To evaluate psychological status or depression 55% use the NCCN distress thermometer, 36% the patient interview, and 34% ask the patient directly if they're depressed. >25% of respondents don't evaluate cognitive status at all, and 54% (top answer) ask simple questions to assess orientation. When abnormalities from CGA were identified, 83% noted referral to supportive services as the most common step, followed by discussing the results with patient/family and coordinating with appropriate specialties. Challenges with palliative care referrals were prevalent, with 68% reporting that patients don't understand the benefit, 55% saying it's occurring late in the treatment experience, and 40% claiming physicians don't understand the benefit.

### CONCLUSION

ACCC has compiled resources to address deficits in care, particularly in the community or lower-resourced settings at [acc-cancer.org/geriatric](http://acc-cancer.org/geriatric).

- Written Publication with case studies, effective practices, sample goals
- 6-part webinar series
  - 1: Caring for Your Older Adult Patients with Cancer
  - 2: What Every Cancer Program Team Member Needs to Know About Geriatric Assessment
  - 3: Time for a reMEDy: A Focus on Pharmacy and the Older Adult
  - 4: A Review of Validated Tools for Geriatric Assessment and How to Use Them
  - 5: Empowering the Multidisciplinary Team to Support Care for Geriatric Oncology Patients
  - 6: Early Introduction of Palliative Care and Best Practices for End of Life
- Resource List with over 50 validated tools



Continue the conversation about improving care for older adults with cancer at [www.acc-cancer.org/geriatric](http://www.acc-cancer.org/geriatric) or contact Elana Plotkin, CMP-HC at [eplotkin@acc-cancer.org](mailto:eplotkin@acc-cancer.org).

### PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS



Association of Community Cancer Centers