# Patients' experiences of lung cancer during COVID-19

## Insights from Taiwan

GLOBAL LUNG CANCER COALITION

## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on patients, including those living with lung cancer, and healthcare systems around the world.

The Global Lung Cancer Coalition (GLCC), an alliance of 42 patient organisations from 30 countries across the world, wanted to understand if COVID-19 is still impacting the care patients receive, and to compare the experiences of patients in different countries.

In December 2021, the GLCC shared a **global online patient experience survey**.

The survey ran for eight weeks and received **555 responses** from patients across **21 countries**.

## Key findings from Taiwan

### Demographics

**75** lung cancer patients or their carers responded

**81%** of respondents identified as female, **17%** identified as male

**71%** were diagnosed in the last **five years**

**92%** have non-small cell lung cancer

### Treatment

**Three quarters (75%)** of responding patients are currently **having treatment**. **22%** had **finished treatment**, and **one** had **just been diagnosed**

### Involvement in decisions

**89% felt involved** to some extent in decisions to some about their treatment and care. **8%** said they **were not** involved but would like to have been involved

### Accessing information

**Over half (57%)** of responding patients said they got the information they needed at the right time. But, a third (31%) **had to look for more information**, and a few (6%) said that what they received **wasn't helpful**

### Screening

**45%** of responding patients said they were **aware** of a lung cancer screening programme in Taiwan. 28% of patients were not aware of one, and 27% were not sure

Only **three** patients said they had been invited for screening and **one** of those had their lung cancer diagnosed this way

**83%** of responding patients said they **would attend** a screening appointment if they were invited

### Emotional impact

**Getting the lung cancer diagnosis** had the biggest emotional impact on **47%** of patients, followed by **waiting to find out test results**

**45%** are worried about the **financial impact of cancer on them or their family**, while **38%** said they are **worried or depressed about their health and future** and **34%** said they are **fearful of relapse**

**46%** of responding patients said their **treatment team** helped them to deal with their emotions, while **37%** had help from a patient advocacy group. **32%** turned to **family and friends**

### Impact of COVID-19

**80%** of responding patients have been vaccinated against COVID-19, while **11%** chose **not** to get the vaccine

Over **half (56%)** of responding patients said their treatment **continued as normal** during COVID-19. **46%** had continued to have **appointments** during the pandemic. No patients said face-to-face appointments had been swapped to video or telephone appointments

A **majority** of patients **prefer face-to-face appointments in all situations**, particularly when finding out their diagnosis, for the first consultation and regular appointments. 20% would like a telephone apointment if there is something they are worried about

## Call to action

The members of the GLCC are calling for the implementation of the rights outlined in its Patient Charter, namely ensuring that all lung cancer patients have access to quality healthcare; informed self-determination, which includes involvement in decision-making; and physical and mental integrity.

## More information

The GLCC's member in Taiwan is: Formosa Cancer Foundation: https://www.canceraway.org.tw/

For more information about this survey and the work of the GLCC, please visit our website at: https://www.lungcancercoalition.org/

You can email our secretariat at: glcc@roycastle.org