

## Feedback from people with cancer Breast Cancer Care Survey



### Introduction & Methods

- postal mail out to charity's distribution list of 2000 people
- distribution 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012

### Results

- 80 responses. This equates to a 4% response rate.

It is extremely important that readers exercise caution when interpreting these results. With such a low response rate these findings cannot be assumed to accurately reflect those of people with breast cancer (or other cancers) in general.

- Gender:
  - of those who provided this information, all were female (14% didn't complete)
- Age:
  - two thirds (66%) were aged between 51 and 70
  - a quarter (25%) were between 31 and 50 years
  - less than 10% were 71 or over
  - one person didn't give their age

### TIMING OF CANCER DIAGNOSIS

- All respondents had been diagnosed with cancer at some point
  - 11% (n=9) within the last 12 months
  - 81% (n=65) between 1 and 10 years ago
  - 25% (n=13) diagnosed 11 or more years ago
- *Note this exceeds 100% as it includes 7 people for whom two time periods for cancer diagnosis were indicated.*

### EXPERIENCE OF MESSAGE

- 10% of respondents had never had a massage
  - 48% (n=39) had massage before they were diagnosed with cancer
  - 38% (n=31) had massage during cancer treatments
  - 48% (n=39) had massage after cancer treatments were finished
- *Note this exceeds 100% as it includes 12 people who had massage at all three time periods, 15 who had massage at two time periods and 43 people who had massage at only one of these*
- One third (n=27) of respondents plan to have massage in the next 6 months
- respondents were asked if they felt massage was always, sometimes or never a positive experience in general and on the quality of life specifically (Figure 1).

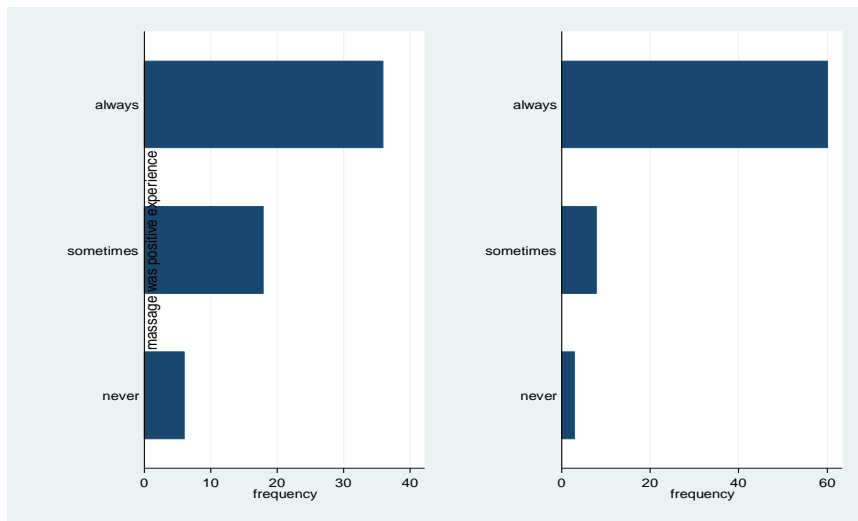


Figure 1. Positive effect of massage on quality of life (left) and as an experience overall (right)

## PERCEPTION OF MESSAGE IN RELATION TO CANCER

### 1. Timing

- Respondents were asked about whether massage was beneficial or not at four time periods: at the time of diagnosis, surgery, treatments, after treatments (Figure 2).

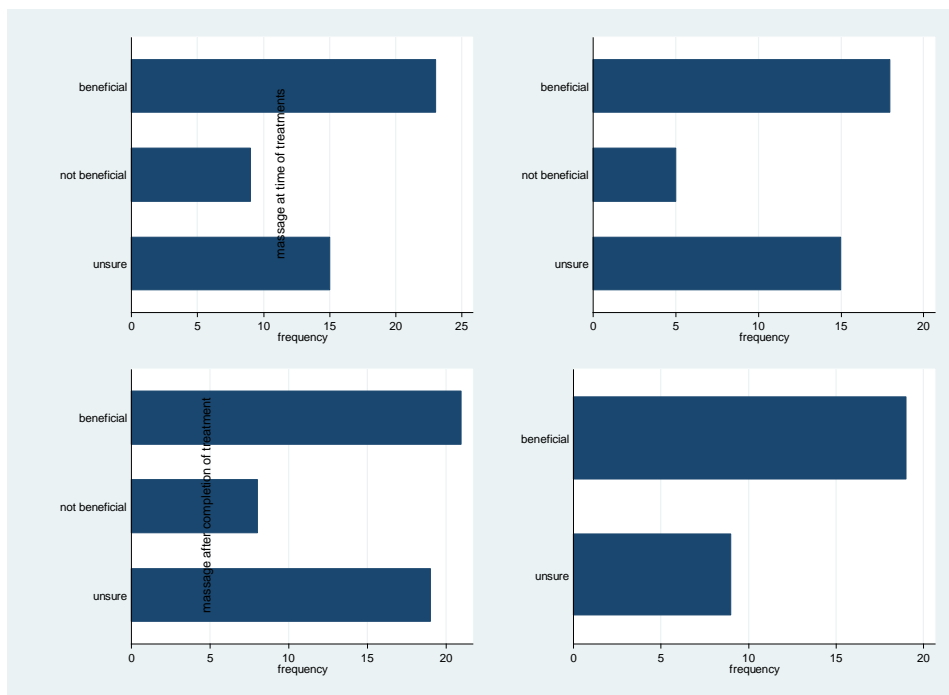
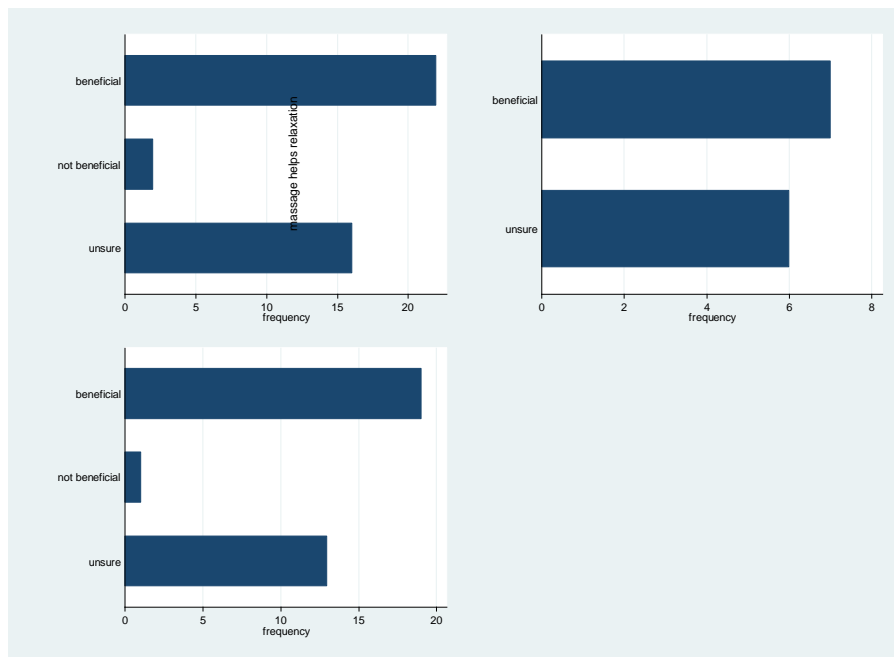


Figure 2. Respondents perception of benefit of massage at time points related to cancer diagnosis and treatment

## 2. Effect

- Respondents were asked about whether massage was beneficial in three specific ways: body confidence, relaxation and to complement the medical approach (Figure 3).



**Figure 3. Respondents perception of specific benefits of massage**

- seven respondents described other benefits of massage in relation to cancer: a general sense of well being & relaxation or enjoyment; continuity of care after hospital discharge, pain relief from tense muscles, and use of Indian head massage after hair loss.
- three other respondents used this comments section to indicate that they had been advised by medical professionals not to have massage, and one whose massage therapist had asked her to sign a disclaimer saying that the massage may cause the spread of cancer cells. She left and has never returned for massage.

## ISSUES IN RELATION TO MESSAGE FOR CANCER

### 1. knowledge and information

- Respondents were asked about knowledge and information related to cancer for massage: their own knowledge, their confidence that massage is right for them, health professionals' knowledge and information provided by health professionals (Figure 4).

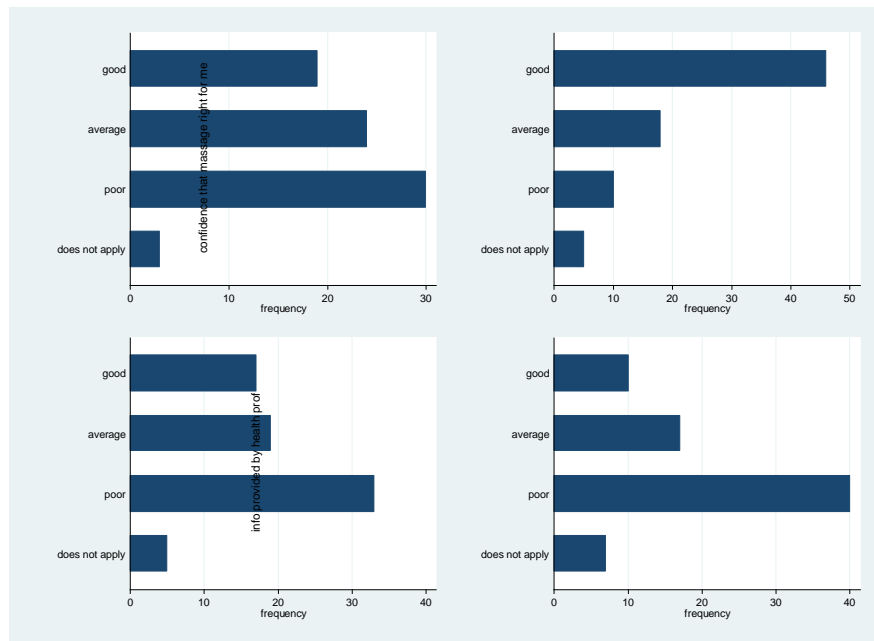


Figure 4. Respondents self reports of information and knowledge in relation to massage for cancer

### 2. Access

- Respondents were asked about their ability to access massage: finding an appropriately trained therapist, a conveniently located therapist, and their ability to pay for treatments (Figure 5).

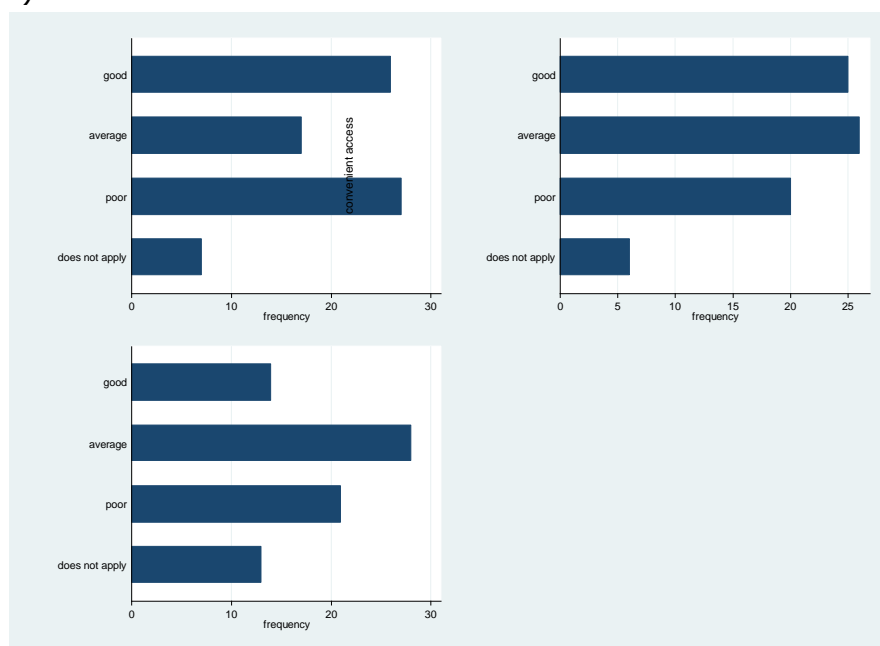


Figure 5. Respondents' ability to access and pay for massage

## PREFERRED SETTINGS FOR MASSAGE FOR CANCER

- 87% of respondents provided one or more settings where they preferred to receive massage
- respondents gave an average of 3 settings (range 0 to 7) (Figure 6).
- 10 'other' preferred settings were: named Cancer service providers (Maggie's, Lavender Trust, Tak Tent, Little Haven Forth Cancer Care) from whom they had received massage (n=3), any location as long as it's restful / peaceful / private & complements the therapy (n=3), anywhere locally for convenience with other appointments (n=2).

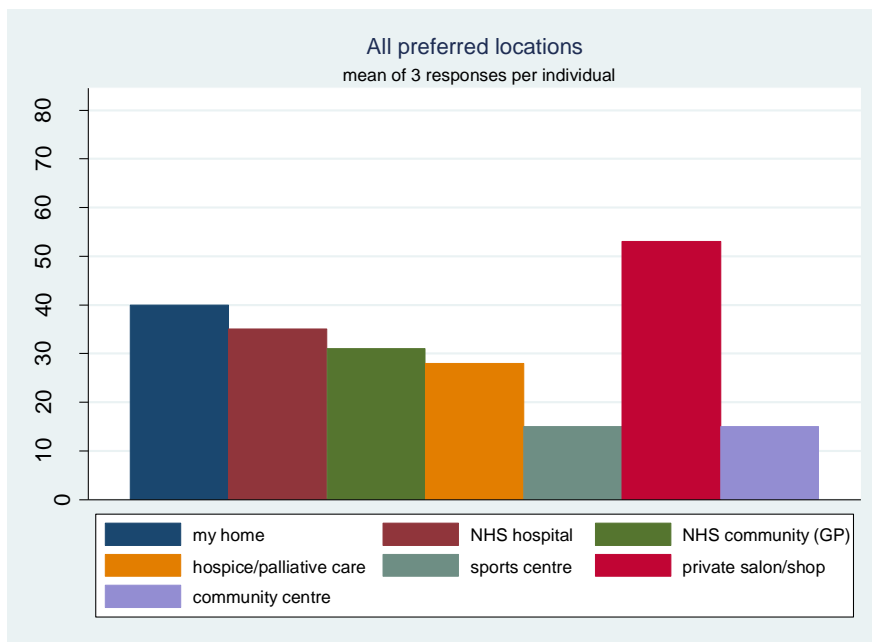


Figure 6. Respondents preferred locations for receiving massage

## OTHER COMMENTS RELATING TO FOR MASSAGE FOR CANCER

- 26 respondents offered further comments – these are summarised below
  - 10 respondents made pleas for further information or commented on the mixed messages (or definitive guidance about high risk of massage) they had received from health professionals and massage therapists
  - 8 indicated that they had sought, but been unable to find affordable / free massage
  - 6 suggested that massage should be free on the NHS or more widely promoted in relation to cancer recovery after their own positive experiences
  - 3 had sought and been unable to find private therapists willing to massage them at all, or for deep/whole body massage
  - 3 had benefited from free local sessions
  - 1 person said that choice for patients and therapists was important.