

Malnutrition Risk Assessment in an Ambulatory Day Oncology Service



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BACKGROUND

- Malnutrition is common in cancer patients and negatively impacts treatment outcomes and quality of life. It is estimated to affect a third of people diagnosed with cancer in Ireland.
- It is often present in those with a high body mass index and is maybe overlooked.
- The European Society of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (ESPEN) and the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) recommend nutrition screening for all cancer patients at diagnosis and regularly throughout their cancer journey to assess and manage malnutrition risk.

AIMS

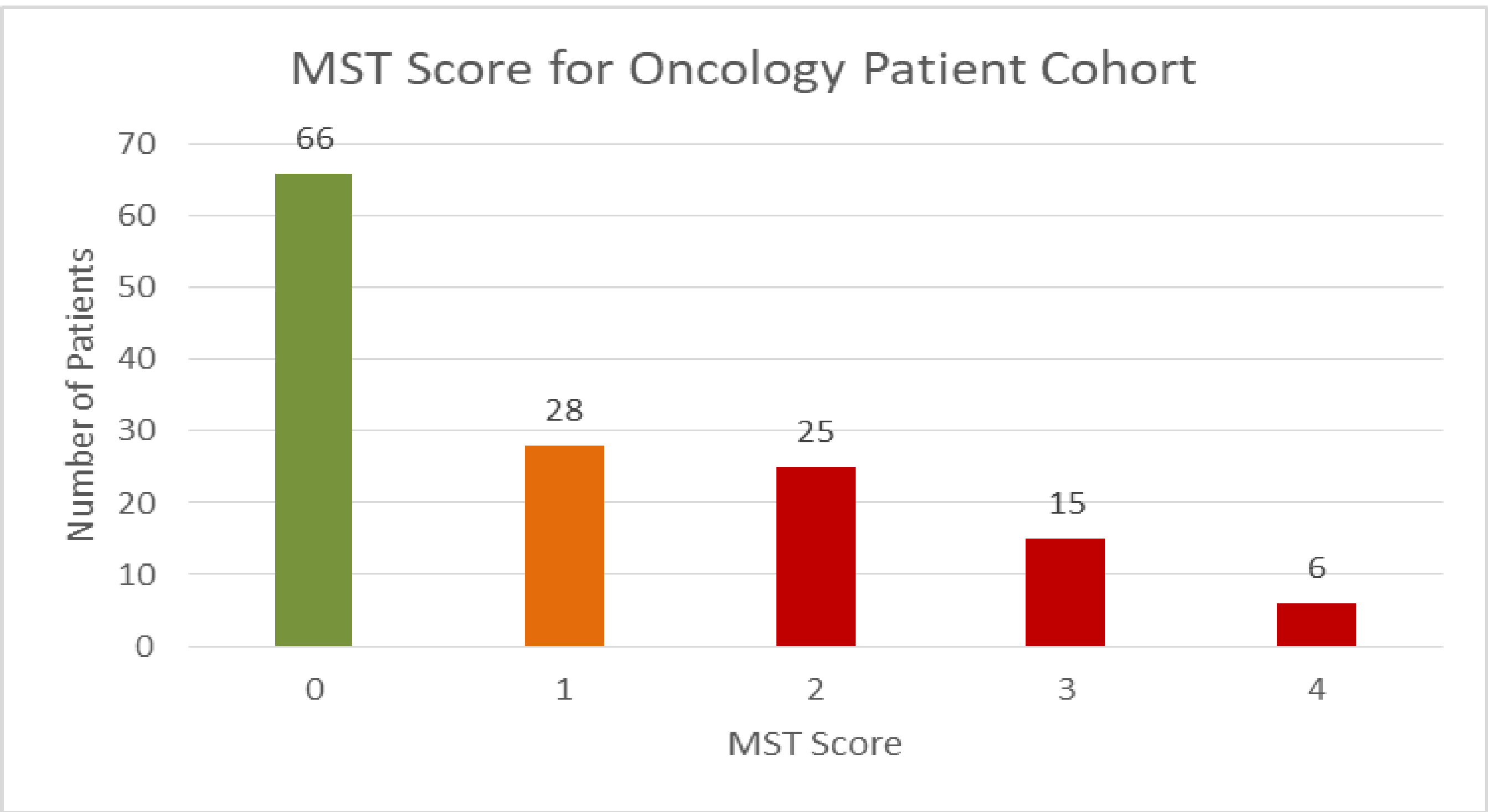
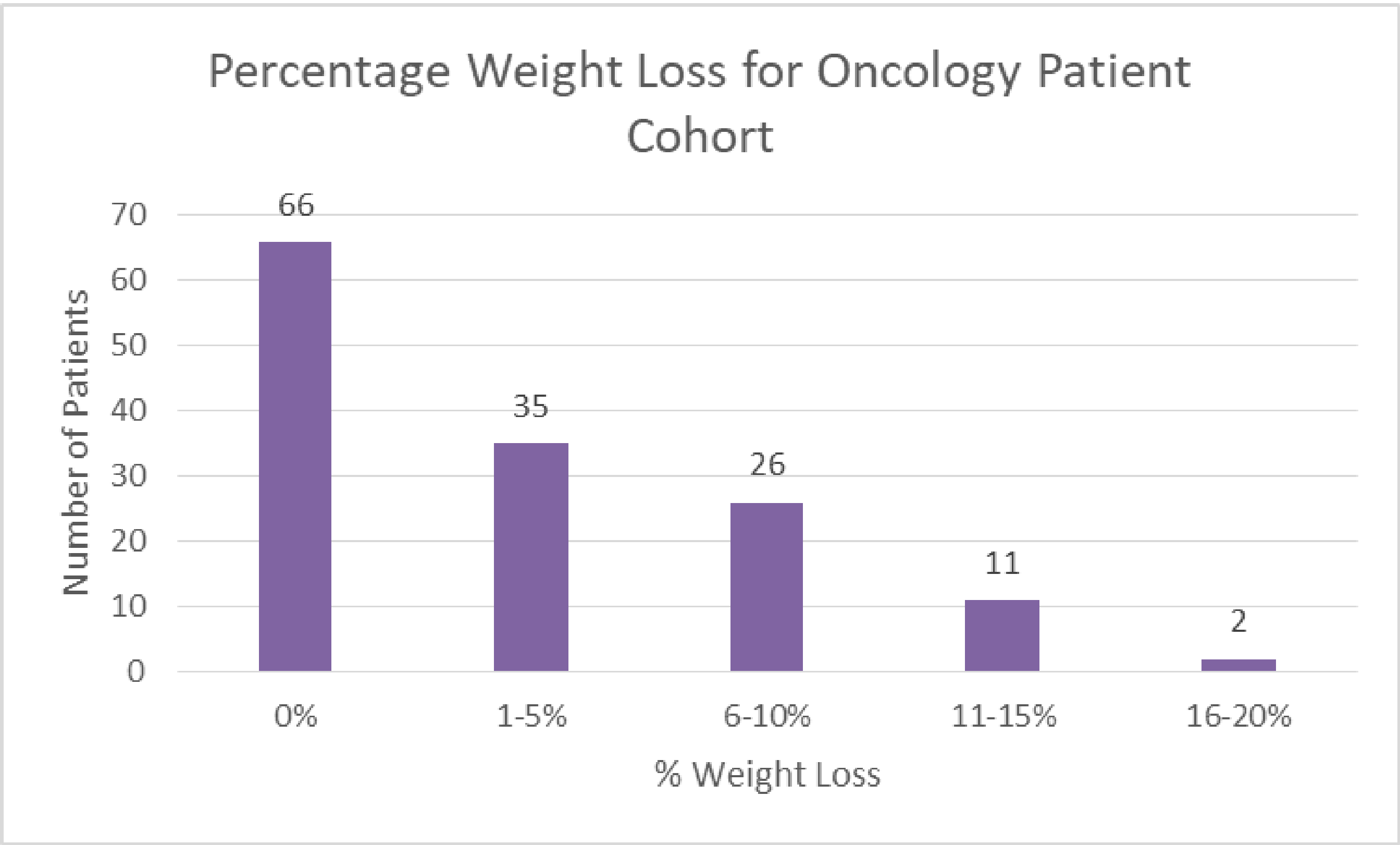
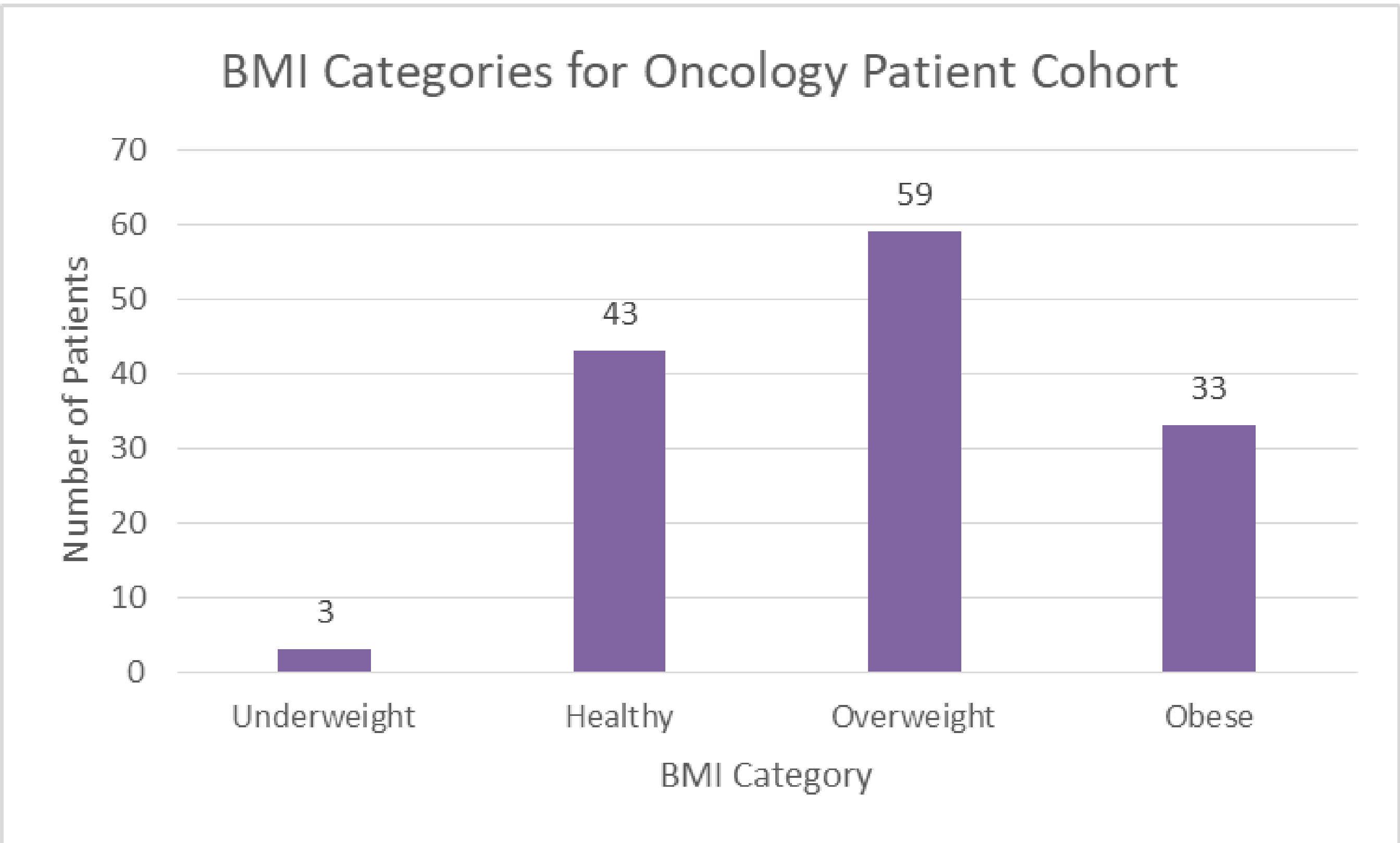
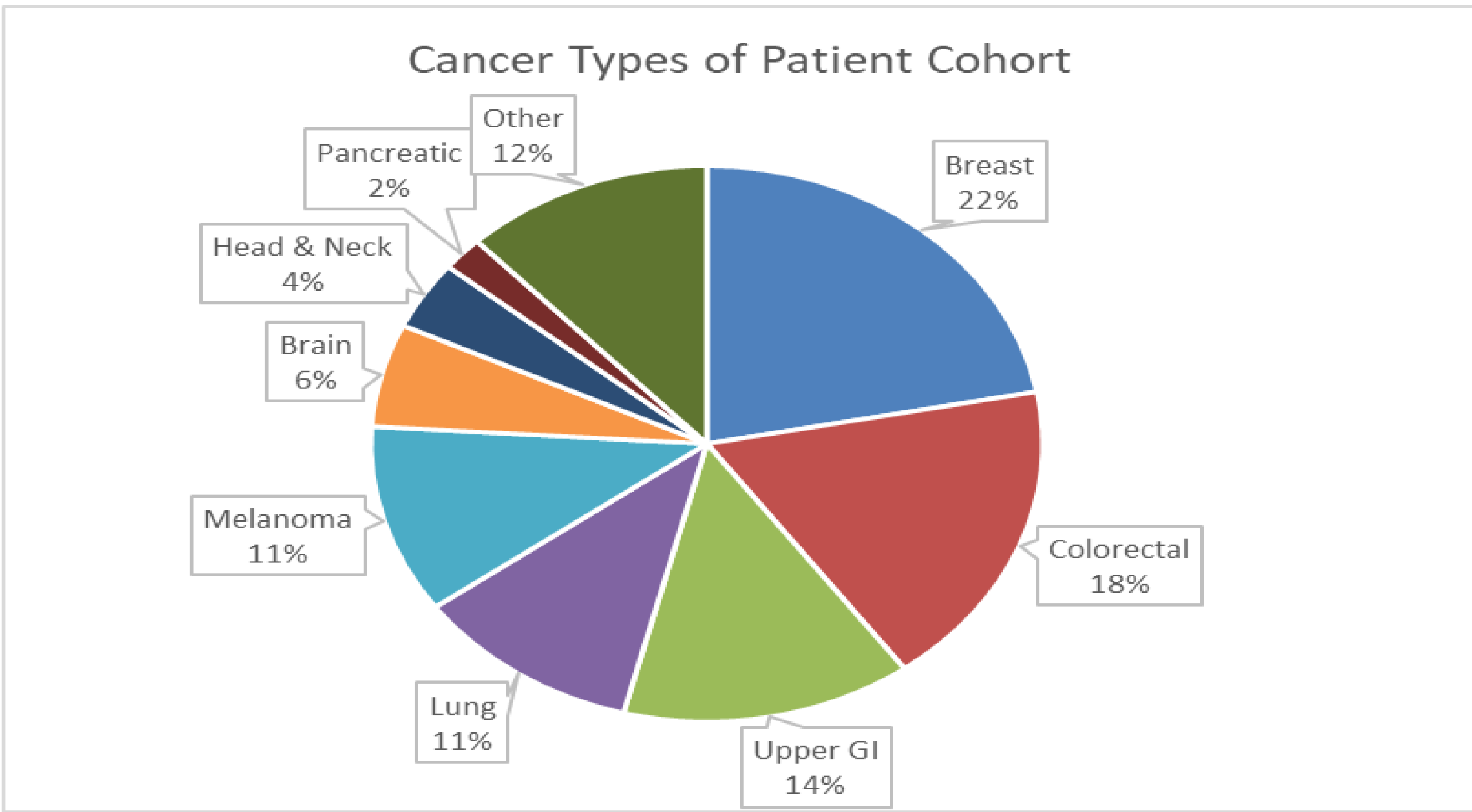
- To evaluate malnutrition risk in patients attending the oncology day ward and assess whether such patients were referred to the dietetic service and/or received previous dietetic input.

METHODS

- The medical charts of patients attending the oncology day ward for IV treatment over the course of a 5 days were reviewed.
- Data were collected on gender, age, diagnosis, treatment, weight, height and nutrition impact symptoms.
- BMI and percentage weight loss in the previous six months were calculated.
- Malnutrition risk was assessed using the Malnutrition Screening Tool (MST).
- Information regarding dietetic referrals and interventions were determined using medical charts, dietetic E-referral system and statistical data.

RESULTS

- 140 patients were included, 59% female, average age 61 years old.
- 34% of patients were identified as being at risk of malnutrition (MST score ≥ 2).
- Of those patients identified as being at risk of malnutrition, 56% had previous dietetic input and 20% had been referred to the dietetic department via the oncology day ward.
- Of those at risk of malnutrition, 57% were classed as being overweight or obese.
- 49% reported 1 or more nutrition impact symptoms (poor appetite, nausea, vomiting, taste changes, dry/sore mouth, dysphagia, constipation, diarrhoea, pain, fatigue).



RECOMMENDATIONS

- A validated screening tool should be used to assess for malnutrition on a regular basis during treatment rather than reliance on BMI, as the majority of patients identified as being at risk of malnutrition were overweight or obese.
- Provide regular education for oncology day ward staff in relation to the importance malnutrition screening and early dietetic intervention.
- A patient-generated malnutrition screening tool has been introduced to the ‘myPatientSpace’ app.
- Expand dietetic staffing levels to enhance patient care and staff education.

REFERENCES ON REQUEST

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