

Assessing Psychological Effects of Covid-19 in Cancer Patients

A. Patel MD, S. Kamboj MD, S. Amara MD, D. Liles MD, M. Muzaffar MD
 Vidant Medical Center • Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University • Greenville, North Carolina



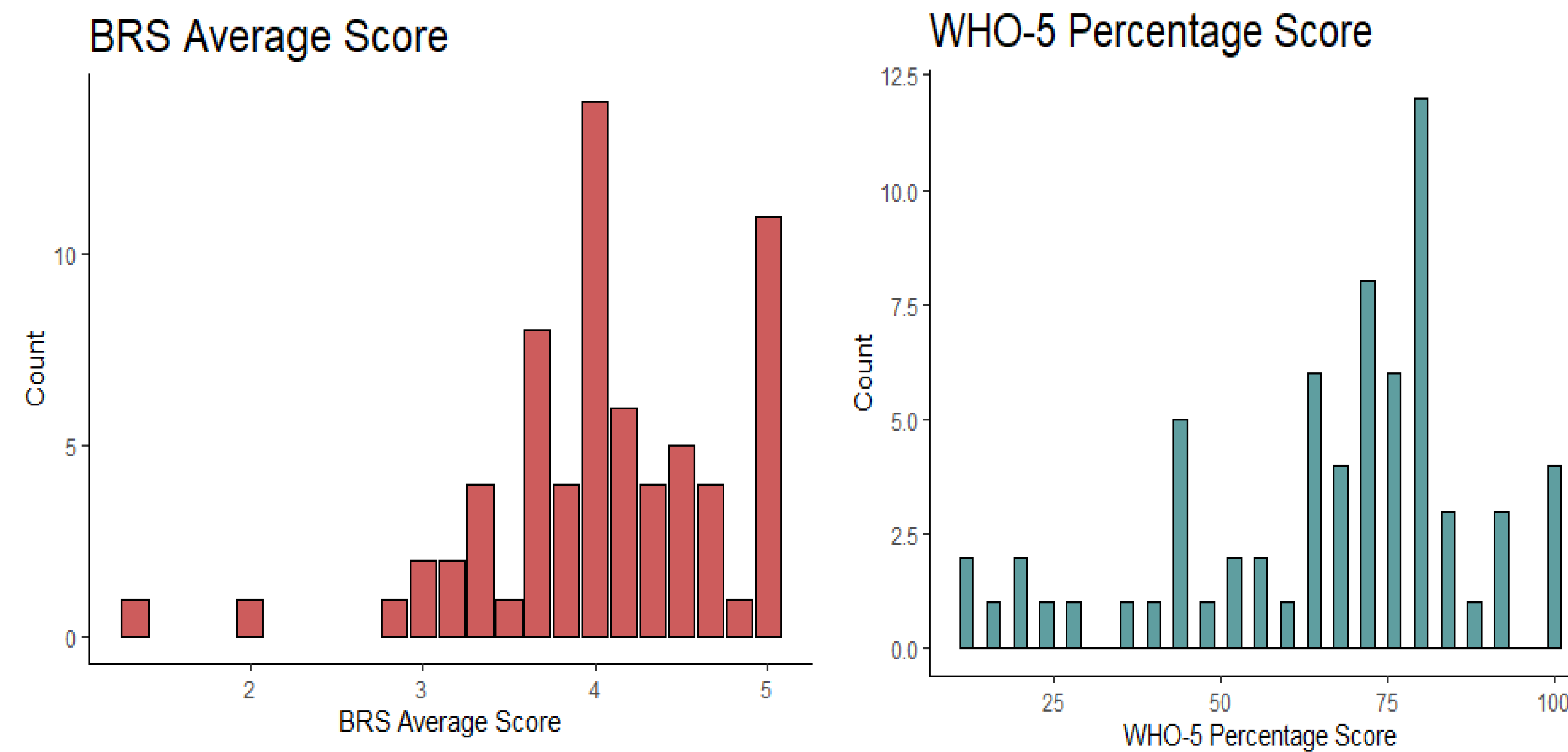
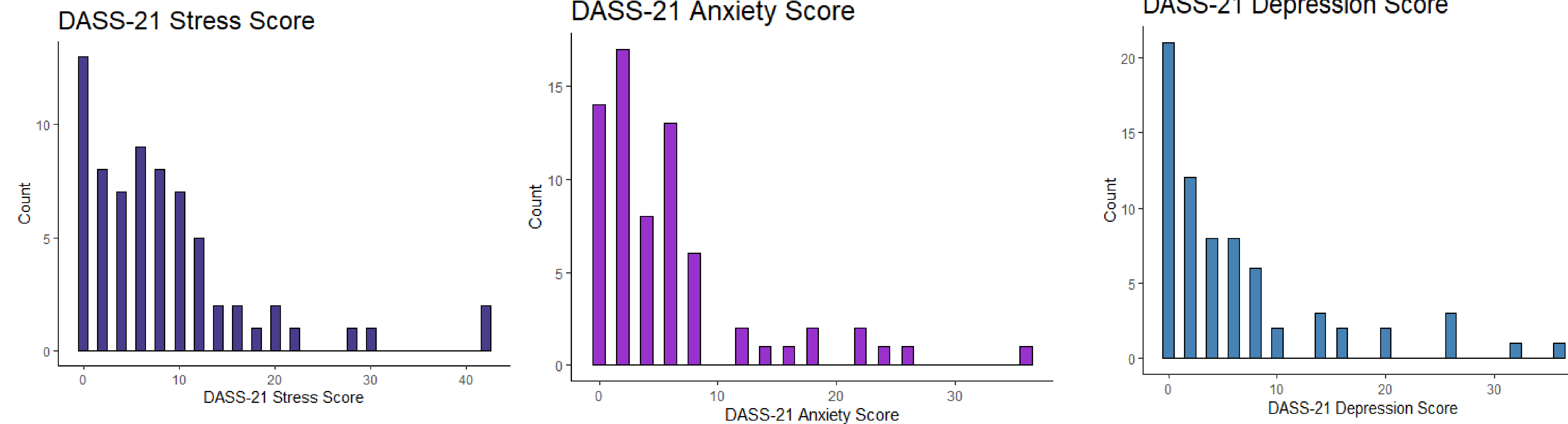
BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

A cancer diagnosis greatly impacts the emotional wellbeing of patients. While anxiety and depression are common in cancer patients, the COVID-19 pandemic has added further burden to this patient population. Recent data from the 2020 National Cancer Opinion Survey showed that COVID-19 has had many negative effects on the well-being of cancer patients. Nearly 50% of the respondents felt the pandemic has had a negative impact on their mental health and nearly 42% wished they had more emotional support during this time. A little more than 50% of respondents reported having to make sacrifices in their daily lives due to their heightened risk of COVID-19.

METHODS

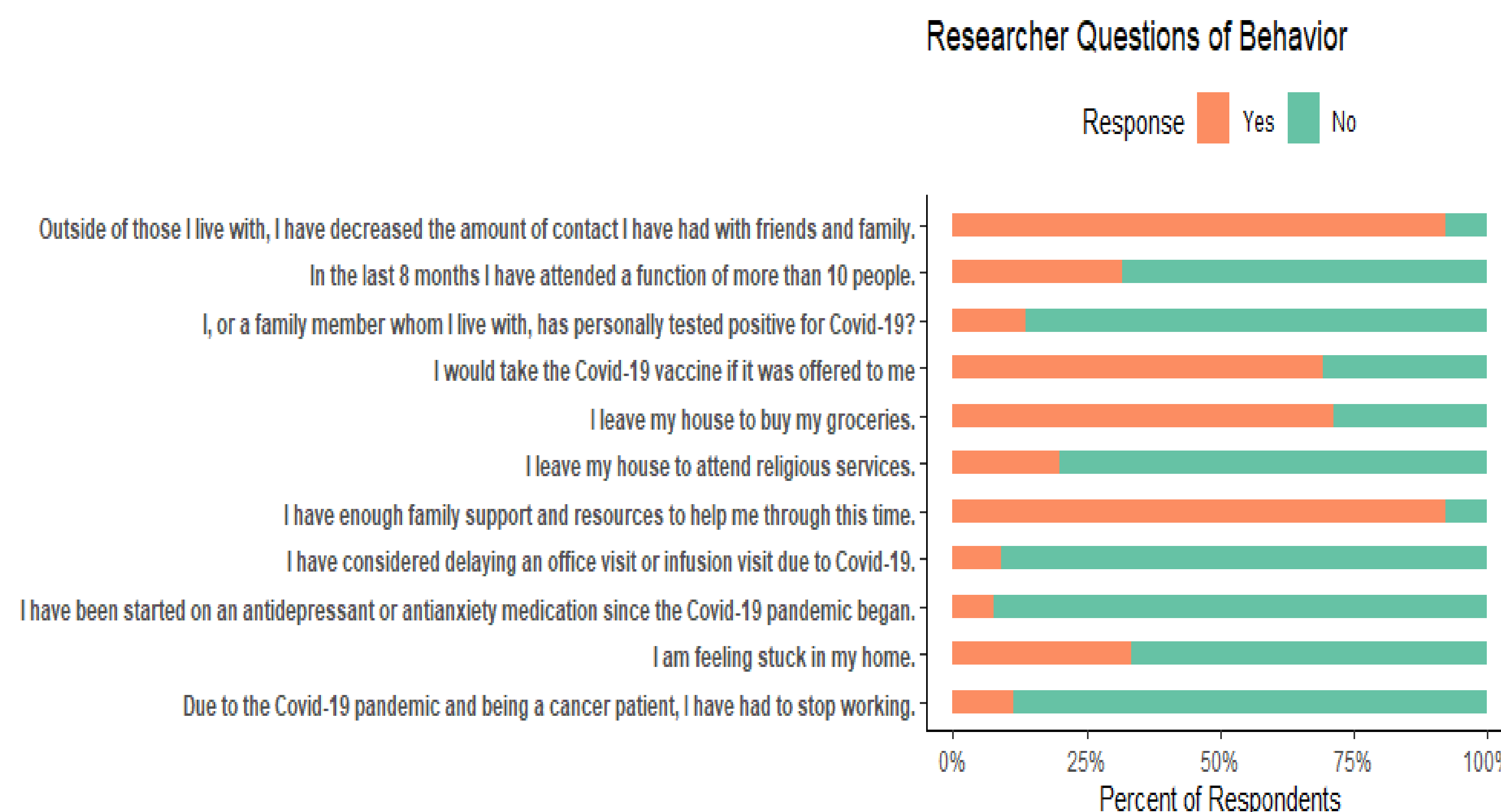
We screened patients age 18 or older with a diagnosis of solid or hematologic malignancy, on active treatment or surveillance at Vidant Cancer Center. An IRB-approved survey was implemented to eligible, consenting patients. Three validated screening tools were administered: Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21), World Health Organization Wellbeing Index (WHO-5 questionnaire), and Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), in addition to a series of investigator created “yes/no” questions. The primary endpoints were to assess overall well-being and behavioral changes due to the pandemic.

RESULTS/OUTCOMES



CONCLUSIONS

Majority of patients surveyed had low DASS-21 scores indicating low levels of stress, anxiety and depression during the pandemic. Most patients reported high BRS scores which corresponds to high levels of resilience during the pandemic. Overall, most respondents reported high WHO-5 scores which indicate overall well being. These results differ from the data from the national cancer survey. There were mixed results when respondents were asked about changes in daily behavior. Limitations to the study include small sample size, non representative patient demographics and time at which the survey was performed.



REFERENCES

Swainston J, Chapman B, Grunfeld EA and Derakshan N (2020) COVID-19 Lockdown and Its Adverse Impact on Psychological Health in Breast Cancer. *Front. Psychol.* 11:2033. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.02033

COVID-19 Pandemic Mental Health Questionnaire (CoPaQ): Rek, S., Freeman, D., Reinhard, M., Keeser, D., & Padberg, F. (2020). The Covid-19 Pandemic Mental Health Questionnaire (CoPaQ): Introducing a comprehensive measure of the psychosocial impact of the coronavirus crisis.

Gregory, Brielle (2020). 2020 National Cancer Opinion Survey: Cancer Screening and Mental Health During COVID-19, Racism and Cancer Care, and Misperceptions Around Cancer Clinical Trials