

Acorn Cancer Support Group

Summary Evaluation of Meetings and Social Outings

MCF Project - Oct 2017 – Sept 2018

Evaluation Method

Evaluation of the support that Acorn provides to member is a vital aspect of our management procedures. We evaluated how well Acorn was meeting its main objectives on several occasions during the year.

Acorn's main objectives are:

- To ameliorate distress
- To reduce loneliness and isolation
- To enhance quality of life

Everything provided to patients and carers is at no-cost to them.

Patient and carer attendance at our 36 group meetings in the year totalled 696 - an average of 58 per month. Total attendance, including the support team was 985. While quantitative measures (numbers attending and returning to meetings) are important, achievement of the above objectives, which are subjective, are best assessed by questionnaire and a numerical scale. Acorn uses the five-point scale shown below related to an individual response to a question. The cells below are given score of 1 to 5 reading from left to right i.e., "No, not at all" scores 1 and "Yes, a lot" scores 5.

No, not at all	A little	Yes, to reasonable extent	Yes, to a good extent	Yes, a lot
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We then invite respondents to make any specific comment on what Acorn means to them and any general comment.

Results of Evaluation of General Support - Sample of 63

1.Reduction of Distress

45 said "Yes a lot", 17 said "Yes to a good extent" [1 gave no answer]

These results give a weighted mean score of 4.72 on the 5-point scale

2. Reduction of loneliness and isolation, and enhancement of quality of life

49 said "Yes a lot", 13 said "Yes to a good extent" 1 said "to a reasonable extent"

These results give a weighted mean score of 4.76 on the 5-point scale

Sample individual responses to the question

“What does Acorn mean to you?”

“In many ways Acorn has transformed my life and reversed the negative effects of cancer, enabling me to enjoy socialising” (Female Patient)

“Lovely group of people. Look forward to all activities we attend and talk and have a laugh about many things” (Female Carer)

“Talking to others on their cancer journey, making new friends, giving me hope, and socialising generally” (Female Patient)

“Occasions to meet fellow members which provides much pleasure to me and takes my mind off daily difficulties. Also provides an opportunity to help others if needed” (Male Patient, also Carer)

Complementary Relaxation Therapy

Therapies (massage, aromatherapy, reflexology and reiki) have proved to be very popular over the years and the evaluation over the past year confirmed their value. For this case we invite respondents to state their feeling of wellbeing both before and after the treatment, using a similar 5-point scale. The table below shows the results with a sample size of 51:

Patient and Carer feeling before and after treatment

	Feeling Before	Feeling After
Not too good	9	0
Below Par	17	0
Average	18	5
Well	5	17
Very Well	2	29
Total Sample	51	51
Weighted Mean	2.49	4.47

This shows that feelings of “wellness” had increased by 2 points on this 5-point scale. 31 respondents of the 51 provided comments, all of which was complimentary to the therapist and positive over the value of the treatment.

Social Outings

Our social outings fell into two categories. Firstly, those for the whole group with members from all three venues involved. In this case up to 80 people may attend. We also offer a range of outings for smaller groups, typically organised for members at one venue. In this case up to 25 may be involved.

Over the year we were able to provide 588 places on outings. This was 178 more than the previous year. The outings included three lunchtime events for the whole group. Also, we provided four types of outings for smaller groups. These included boat trips with lunch, film club with lunch, and a range of outings with either lunch or tea provided. We received 238 responses on questionnaires which provided feedback for the outings on which individual members had participated.

Social outings are intended to achieve our objective to reduce the loneliness and isolation of members and enhance their quality of life. The results of the evaluation for social outings of all types were as follows:

Meaning of score	No, not at all	A little	A reasonable amount	Yes, to a good extent	Yes, a lot
Score	1	2	3	4	5
Nos giving score	0	0	2	24	212

This gives a weighted mean of 4.88 on the 5-point scale

Sample individual comments on social outings

“I really look forward to all the activities. I feel happy and comfortable at all times” (*Female Patient*)

“Provides opportunities to take part in social event, meeting new friends and those who have been affected by a form of cancer that would normally preclude one.” (*Male Patient*)

“It means a great deal to me personally because of the terrible medical condition which draws us all together in the first place and the extent which each of us has been involved.” (*Male Carer*)

GD 14 October 2018

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