

Media Release

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Cancer symptoms and distress more severe for patients from CALD communities

PERTH: Cancer is more distressing and frightening for immigrants, a scientific conference of cancer experts in Perth will be told today (15/11).

According to Professor Phyllis Butow, from the University of Sydney, cancer patients from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds have worse experiences of cancer than Anglo-Australians.

The study by PhD student Ming Sze, to be presented to the Clinical Oncological Society of Australia (COSA) Annual Scientific Meeting, compared 880 patients, including 545 immigrants and 335 Anglo-Australians, on their emotional distress and perceptions of their illness.

“The psychological experience for immigrants is significantly worse than Anglo-Australians,” Professor Butow said. “Immigrants reported greater severity of symptoms, higher levels of emotional distress and perceived impact on their life and a lower understanding of cancer.”

“This research highlights the need for interventions among the CALD community to address misconceptions about cancer and reduce their stress.”

COSA President, Professor Bogda Koczwara, said an increasing proportion of patients affected by cancer were from CALD backgrounds.

“One in two Australians will get cancer by age 85,” Professor Koczwara said. “It is important that we cater for different languages and cultures so all cancer patients have access to support services, educational programs and assistance.”

[Ms Sze will present her research at 4:20pm today \(15 Nov\) at the Clinical Oncological Society of Australia Annual Scientific Meeting, Riverside Theatre, Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre.](#)

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