

Walter was diagnosed with stage 2a colorectal cancer at 68.

He is married and has children and grandchildren. A back injury in his 20s has had long standing implications on his physical health. He works for a forest management consulting firm. Prior to his cancer diagnosis he enjoyed brisk walks on a regular basis in parks and forests, doing yard work, and travel adventures with family.

Treatment

Focused on managing side effects

Walter had a surgical resection of his colon and rectum followed by 8 rounds of oral chemotherapy over 6 months.

Physical Health

- Decreased strength and stamina limited his physical activities (e.g., walking and lifting).
- By month 3 of chemotherapy he was feeling lethargic and needed afternoon naps to get through the day.
- Managed symptoms of hand-foot syndrome by treating his hands and feet with cream daily.
- Gum tenderness and bleeding caused discomfort with eating and restricted his diet choices.

Mental Health

- Unhappy more than usual due to being frustrated with feeling less physically strong.
- “Fuzzy brain” (i.e., brain fog) reduced his ability to focus on details and retain information, which negatively impacted his self-confidence and well-being.

Social Health

- Well-supported by wife, children, and siblings.
- Family was a source of strength.
- Peer support was a helpful resource for learning more about the treatment options he was offered.

Post-Treatment

Focused on the future and enjoying life

Recovering after treatment was a gradual process. It took Walter about a year and a half to regain his strength and energy.

Physical Health

- Physically tired.
- Physical activities (e.g., walking and lifting) continued to be limited due to decreased strength and stamina.

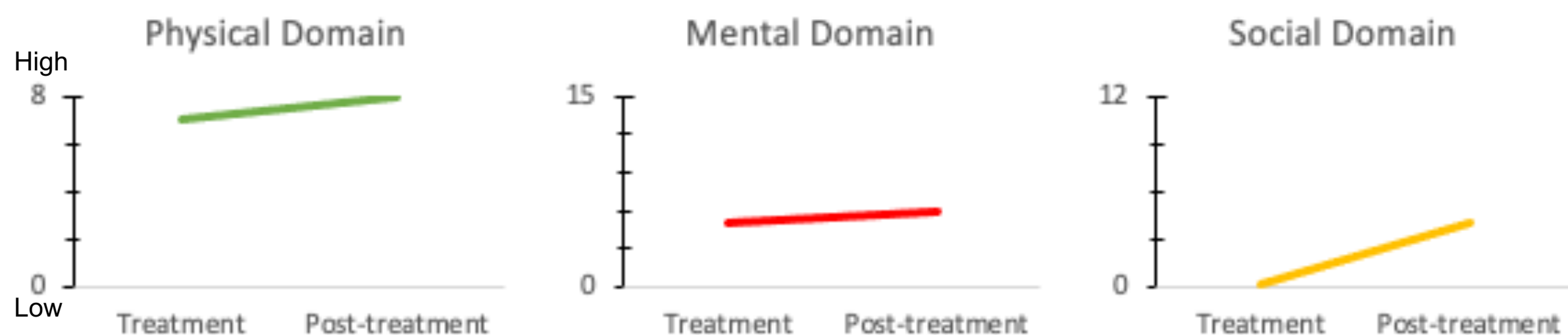
Mental Health

- Mentally tired.
- Continued to have lower self-confidence, some frustration, and felt less able to cope with problems due to side effects of “fuzzy brain” (i.e., brain fog).
- Enjoys life but cancer is always in the back of his mind.

Social Health

- Wife was his primary support.
- After treatment ended, he felt alone and on his own initially as he adjusted to no longer having the treatment team as part of his support network.

Frailty Assessment Scores



Moderate to high because reduced strength and energy levels, compounded by a previous back injury, continued to affect Walter’s activities of daily living more than a year after his treatment ended. Brain fog, a chemotherapy side effect, persisted and negatively impacted his mental health and well-being.

Opportunities to Discuss Throughout Care

Physical Health: Due to oral symptoms, Walter has had to restrict his diet which may be contributing to his fatigue. Needs individualized guidance on dietary modifications. Discuss strategies for improving nutritional intake and refer to dietician as needed. Discuss expectations for recovery post-treatment (i.e., strength and energy levels).

Mental Health: Inquire about Walter’s mental health and well-being throughout his cancer journey. Discuss his concerns about the “fuzzy brain” side effects he is experiencing. Provide resources and information on managing brain fog.

Social Health: Although Walter had social support from his family, he may have benefited from discussions about what to expect after completing treatment and how to access health care support if needed post-treatment. Provide reliable information and resources about local peer support, caregiver support, and transitioning to life post-treatment.

