BACKGROUND: Older adults are at high risk for cancer treatment–related symptoms but often accept them as inevitable. This may have a negative impact on patient outcomes.

OBJECTIVES: The purpose of this study is to examine symptom self-management strategies used by older adults receiving cancer treatment, determine the effectiveness of these strategies, and examine relationships between symptom self-management and demographic and treatment characteristics.

METHODS: 100 adults aged 65 years or older from a community cancer center participated in this descriptive, exploratory study. Demographic, treatment, and self-management data were collected using an investigator-developed tool. Symptom presence was collected using part 1 of the Symptom Representation Questionnaire.

FINDINGS: Participants reported an average of 7.15 symptoms and 3.36 self-management strategies used at home. Taste changes were managed most, followed by fatigue and bowel changes. On average, strategies used to manage symptoms were moderately effective.

KEYWORDS
symptoms; self-management; older adults; cancer treatment

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