

RETURNING TO WORK AFTER BREAST CANCER: Findings from a National Patient-Led Study in Serbia

Sara Bojanić

Europa Donna Serbia - The Serbian Breast Cancer Forum



665eP

BACKGROUND

Return to work after breast cancer treatment is a key component of survivorship, yet remains insufficiently addressed, particularly in middle-income countries. This study explores employment challenges, motivation, and awareness of labor rights among breast cancer survivors in Serbia.

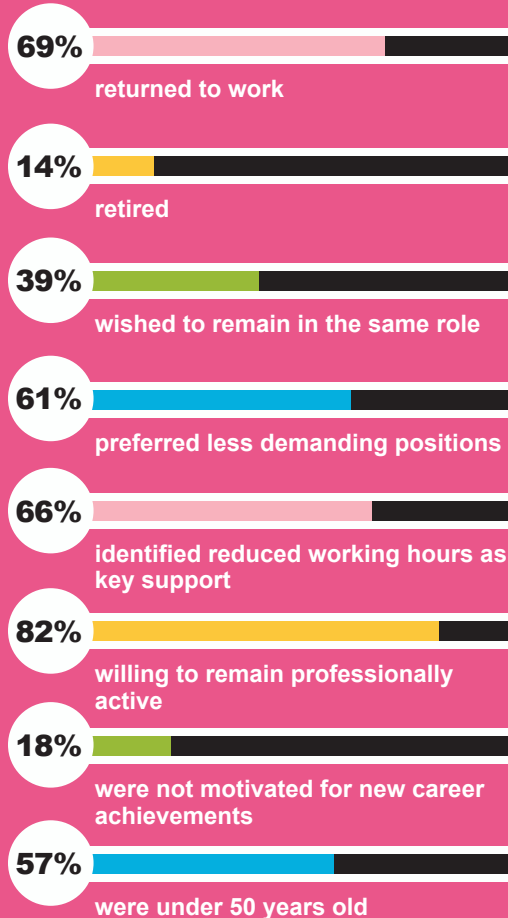
METHODS

A national patient-led survey conducted by Europa Donna Serbia included 785 women treated for breast cancer across Serbia, who voluntarily shared their experiences related to returning to work.

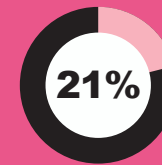
Data were collected through an **anonymous online questionnaire** over a six-week period in late 2024, distributed via Europa Donna Serbia and its member associations.

The survey was conducted **outside health-care institutions**, with informed consent obtained and data protection ensured.

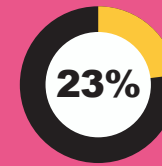
KEY RESULTS



AWARENESS OF RIGHTS:



Labor
legislation



Pension/disability
rights

CONCLUSIONS

Return to work represents a major but under-recognized survivorship challenge. Findings highlight the need for:

- flexible work arrangements
- job adaptation
- stronger employer support
- improved patient education on labor rights

Enhanced **intersectoral collaboration** between healthcare, labor, and social systems is essential to support sustainable survivorship.

IMPACT & APPLICATION

Findings from this research contributed to the development of the **Onco Guide - Breast Cancer Serbia**, a digital patient navigation tool designed to:

- map the patient journey through the healthcare system
- provide clear information on patient rights
- include guidance on **employment rights after return to work**, developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia

The tool is available via QR code

