

# PHYSPECTIVE: Qualitative study on physiotherapy in advanced cancer care: barriers, facilitators, and pathways to excellence.



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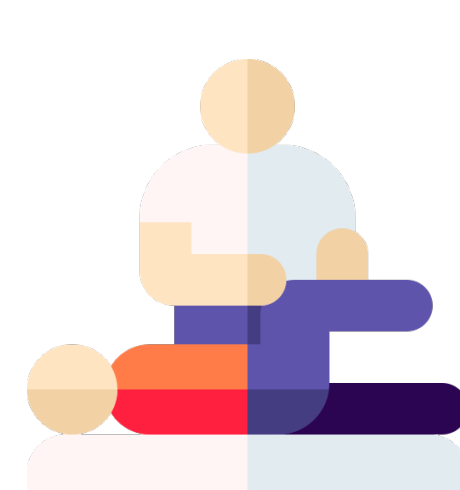
## Background



With advances in cancer treatments, more patients live longer with advanced stages of the disease



Advanced disease >>> facing complex symptom burdens and functional decline



Role of the physiotherapist = **under-recognized & inconsistently integrated**

## Objectives

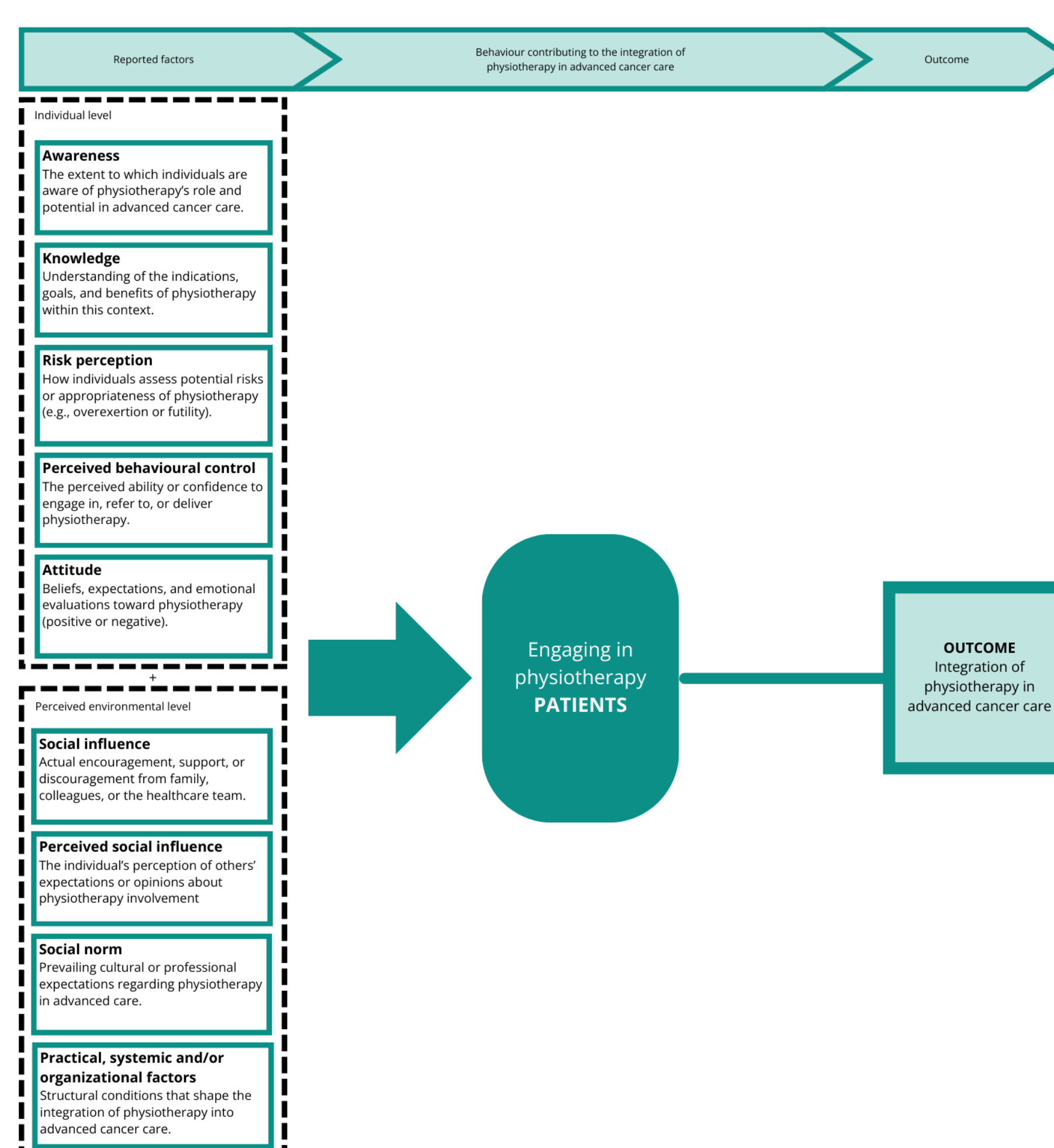
- Multiperspective qualitative study
- To explore **barriers and facilitators** for embedding physiotherapy into advanced oncology pathways



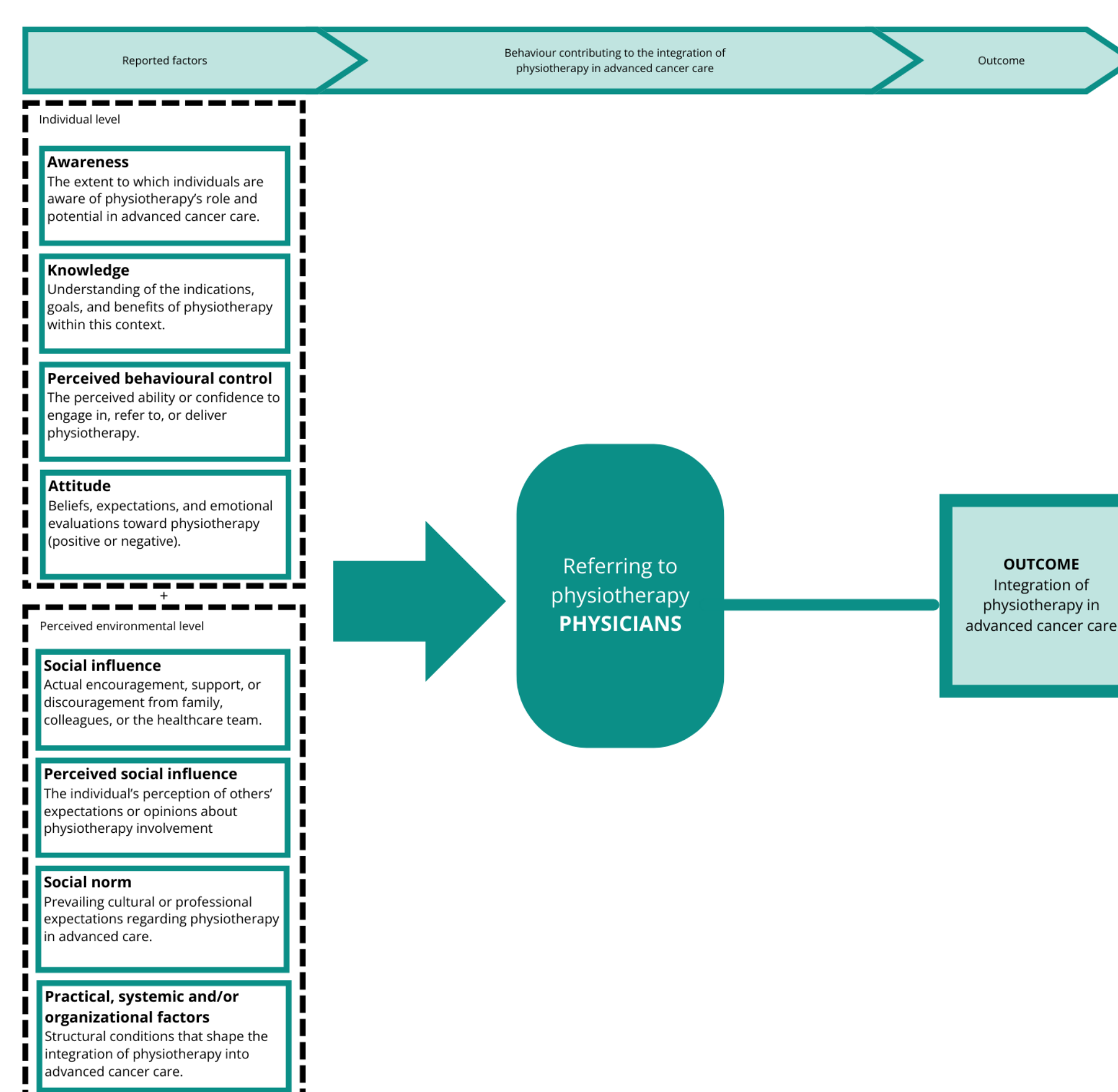
## Methods

- **30** individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with ...
  - physiotherapists (n=10),
  - physicians (n=10),
  - patients with advanced cancer (n=10).
- **Interview guides** were co-developed with experts in oncology, physiotherapy, and palliative/supportive care.
- **Thematic analysis (FRAMEWORK METHOD, Gale et al. 2013).**

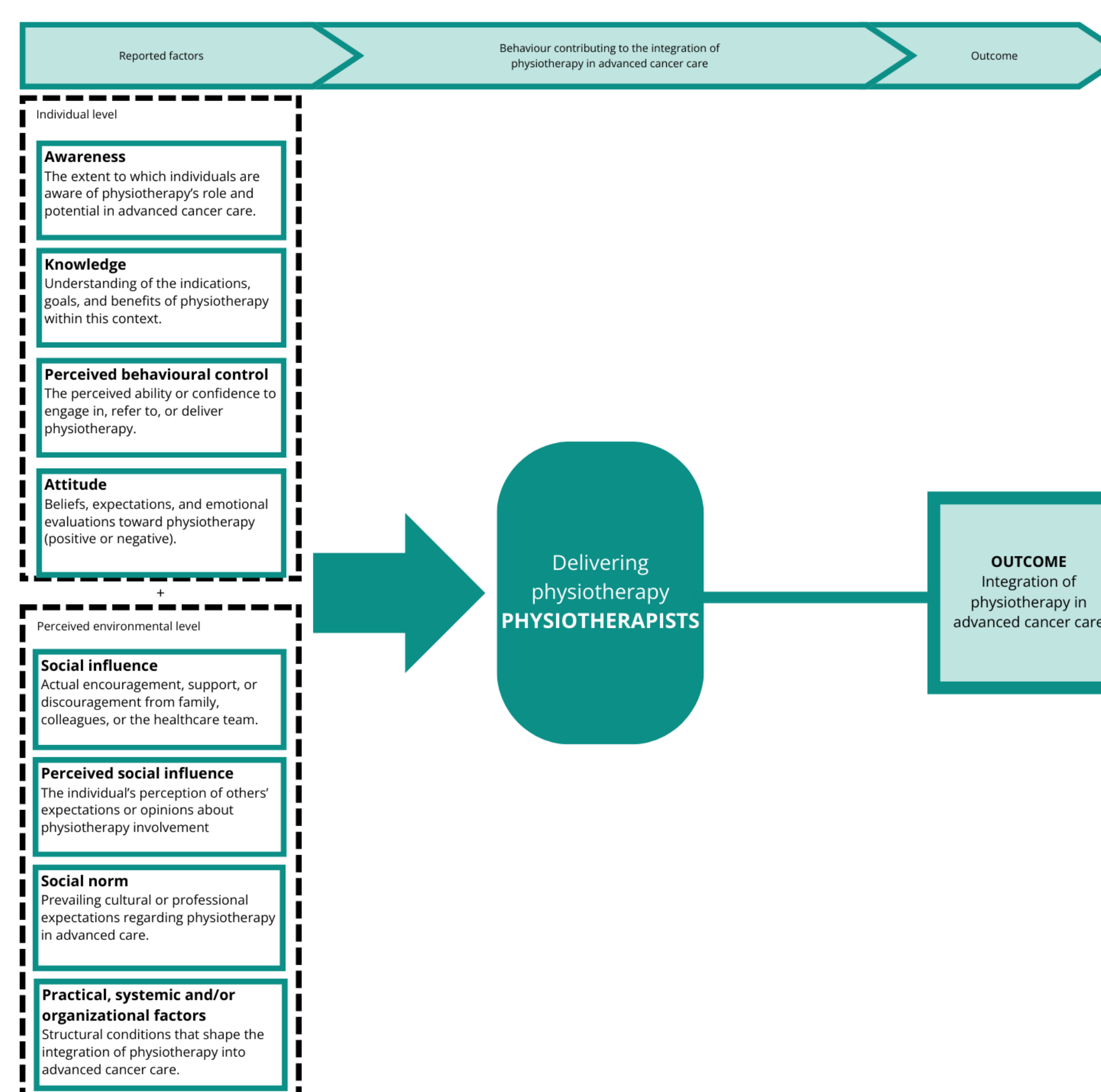
## Results



Behavioural determinants influencing patients' engagement in physiotherapy



Behavioural determinants influencing physicians' referral to physiotherapy



Behavioural determinants influencing physiotherapists' delivery of physiotherapy

## Discussion

Key issues: persistent **knowledge and awareness gaps**

(role and timing of PT, unclear roles, low prioritization, fragmented care structures)

**Social influence and attitudes play a dual role,**

either reinforcing or hindering engagement depending on context.

**Misalignment between stakeholders:**

healthcare professionals often anticipate patient-related barriers (e.g., low motivation or financial concerns), whereas patients themselves rarely report these and instead rely on physician guidance to initiate PT.

Identifying **actionable targets**

(such as education, role clarification, structured referral pathways, and improved multidisciplinary coordination).

## Conclusion

PHYSPECTIVE shows that **physiotherapy is pivotal** in advanced oncology care, where function and dignity are at stake.

**Earlier referral, stronger collaboration, policy support, and tailored training** are key to implementation.

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