

Poster Presentation at 2016 ASCO Annual Meeting

Are patients with advanced cancer concerned about financial toxicity?

Background:

Cancer patients (pts) are more than twice as likely to enter bankruptcy as the general US population. It is unknown how often pts with metastatic cancer are concerned about the financial toxicities (FTox) of treatment.

Methods:

As part of the larger "Living with Cancer" project we prospectively surveyed 941 pts with advanced malignancies receiving treatment with non-curative intent at 6 New Jersey cancer programs within the Regional Cancer Care Associates network. Pts were asked 2 questions about the financial burden and pain associated with cancer (5-point Likert scale).

Results:

Pts felt that "Living with Cancer has impacted the financial well-being of me or my family" severely 44 pts (5%), significantly 124 pts (14%) moderately 193 pts (21%), minimally 250 pts (28%) or not at all 292 pts (32%). For comparison, pts felt "Living with Cancer the pain I experience is" unbearable/constant 12 pts (1%), severe 82 pts (9%), moderate 209 pts (23%), mild 306 pts (34%), non-existent 294 pts (33%). Responses were flagged as concerned if rated severe, significant or moderate. Concern about FTox was more prevalent than about pain ($p < 0.005$). FTox and pain responses had a weak positive correlation ($r = 0.370$; $p < 0.001$). Utilizing median household income per zip code as a surrogate ($n = 867$), logistic regression demonstrated that as income increases the probability of being concerned about FTox decreases significantly ($p < 0.001$). A pt with median US income of \$51,000 has a 48% chance of being concerned about FTox, whereas a pt with income of \$151,000

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has a 23% chance. Younger pts also were significantly ($p < 0.001$) more concerned about FTox; 30 yr 82%, 60 yr 48% and 80 yr 24%. Pts with liquid malignancies had a higher proportion of concerned pts than solid malignancies (liquid 104/218 concerned, solid 241/644 concerned, $p < 0.005$).

Conclusions:

Financial toxicity concerns are common among pts with metastatic/advanced cancers, being self-reported in 40% of pts of this NJ series. FTox concerns were more prevalent than concern about pain, and were more common in pts with liquid rather than solid malignancies. Younger pts and those who live in less affluent neighborhoods are more likely to be concerned about the FTox of cancer care.