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Patients with Cancer Feel Unprepared to Make Treatment Decisions, Study Finds

Data presented at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium Reveals Gaps in Treatment Decision Support for Patients with Metastatic Breast Cancer

SAN ANTONIO – (Dec. 11, 2014) – Data presented by the Cancer Support Community’s Research and Training Institute at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium today shows that there remains a gap in patient readiness to make a treatment decision, even when provided with information.

The majority of patients with metastatic (advanced) breast cancer reported receiving information about their cancer (92 percent) and about their treatment choices (78 percent), yet nearly one-third still felt they had no treatment choice or that they were being rushed to make a decision.

Even still, the majority of patients were satisfied with the aspects of the treatment decision-making process, including; the doctor’s explanation of the risks and benefits of each option, the patient’s involvement in making a decision and the outcome of their treatment.

Patients were asked to identify specific areas in which they would like to get help, such as:

- Gathering information (70 percent)
- Developing a written list of questions (70 percent)
- Obtaining audio recordings of appointments (48 percent)

“Patients with metastatic breast cancer are often more educated about their illness and treatment options. This study identifies important areas where additional support and empowerment could improve their ability to engage even more in the planning of their overall care,” said Kim Thiboldeaux, president and CEO of the Cancer Support Community.

The full poster can be accessed [here](#).

This research underscores the need for additional efforts to address gaps in treatment decision making preparedness, which may include treatment decision counseling for people with cancer.

The data was collected from 572 patients with metastatic breast cancer in the [Cancer Experience Registry](#), a research initiative with the goal of collecting, analyzing and sharing information about the experience and needs of patients and their families throughout the cancer journey. The Cancer Experience Registry currently has more than 7,400 members, and nearly 1,000 are part of the Cancer Experience Registry: Metastatic Breast Cancer.

The Cancer Experience Registry: Metastatic Breast Cancer is made possible thanks to support from Celgene Corporation.

About the Cancer Support Community

The mission of the Cancer Support Community (CSC) is to ensure that all people impacted by cancer are empowered by knowledge, strengthened by action and sustained by community. In 2009, The Wellness Community and Gilda's Club joined forces to become the Cancer Support Community. The combined organization, with more than 50 years of collective experience, provides the highest quality social and emotional support for people impacted by cancer through a network of 50 licensed Affiliates, more than 120 satellite locations and vibrant online and telephone communities, touching more than one million people each year.

Backed by evidence that the best cancer care includes social and emotional support, the Cancer Support Community offers these services free of charge to men, women and children with any type or stage of cancer, and to their loved ones. As the largest professionally led nonprofit network of cancer support worldwide, the Cancer Support Community delivers a comprehensive menu of personalized and essential services including support groups, educational workshops, exercise, art and nutrition classes and social activities for the entire family. Through cutting-edge psychosocial, behavioral and survivorship research, the Cancer Support Community's Research and Training Institute is helping CSC change the future of cancer care through education and training. The Cancer Support Community's Cancer Policy Institute ensures that the voices of 13.7 million cancer survivors and their families are heard in the nation's capital and state and local legislatures across the country. In 2013, the CSC network delivered nearly \$48 million in free services to patients and families. The Cancer Support Community is advancing the innovations that are becoming the standard in complete cancer care. For more information, please visit www.cancersupportcommunity.org

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