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Study Shows Women, Younger People with Lung Cancer Worry More About Discrimination

Cancer Support Community research suggests different experiences with stigma among lung cancer populations

ORLANDO, Fla. – (Mar. 23, 2017) – Women and young adults with lung cancer worry more about people discriminating against them and more strongly agree that lung cancer is viewed as a self-inflicted disease, according to a study presented today by the Cancer Support Community at the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) Annual Meeting.

Patients in the online Cancer Experience Registry: Lung Cancer were asked a series of questions around stigma and how they felt others perceived their cancer. Of the 47 people included in the survey, 91 percent agreed that people assume lung cancer is caused by smoking, and 74 percent agreed that lung cancer is generally viewed as a self-inflicted disease. Women and younger patients were both significantly more likely to agree that lung cancer is viewed as self-inflicted, and they also worried more about people discriminating against them due to their cancer.

Additionally, patients with small-cell lung cancer, a cancer type almost exclusively linked to smoking, felt more guilt and tried harder to keep their diagnosis a secret than patients with other types of lung cancer. The study also showed that people who reported more guilt about having lung cancer were at greater risk for clinical levels of depression and reported more distress about their cancer.

“Despite patient education and public awareness attempts to destigmatize lung cancer, our research shows that stigma, guilt, and worry of discrimination persist among these patients. Further, we are learning that people have different experiences with stigma, based on their gender, age, and even the type of lung cancer they have,” said Alexandra Zaleta, Ph.D., director of research at the Cancer Support Community.

The Cancer Experience Registry: Lung Cancer is one of 10 specialty registries created by the Cancer Support Community to help researchers better understand the full social and emotional needs of people living with cancer, as well as their caregivers. For more information on the Cancer Experience Registry, visit www.CancerExperienceRegistry.org.

The full poster as presented at the NCCN Annual Meeting is available online at www.CancerSupportCommunity.org.

About the Cancer Support Community

As the largest professionally led nonprofit network of cancer support worldwide, the Cancer Support Community (CSC), including its Gilda’s Club affiliates, is dedicated to ensuring that all

people impacted by cancer are empowered by knowledge, strengthened by action and sustained by community. CSC achieves its mission through three areas: direct service delivery, research and advocacy. The organization includes an international network of Affiliates that offer the highest quality social and emotional support for people impacted by cancer, as well as a community of support available online and over the phone. The Research and Training Institute conducts cutting-edge psychosocial, behavioral and survivorship research. CSC furthers its focus on patient advocacy through its Cancer Policy Institute, informing public policy in Washington, D.C. and across the nation. For more information, please call the toll-free Cancer Support Helpline at 888-793-9355, or visit www.CancerSupportCommunity.org. *So that no one faces cancer alone*®

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