



# Treatment Decision-Making Factors Among Individuals with Lung Cancer: Results from a National Education Program

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## Rationale & Overview

The American Cancer Society estimates that over 224,000 will be diagnosed with lung cancer in 2014. In addition to coping with this diagnosis, patients are faced with significant decisions regarding treatment plans. The Cancer Support Community's *Frankly Speaking About Cancer: Lung Cancer* program aims to meet the needs of those directly affected by lung cancer, including addressing treatment decision-making.

In 2012-13, 448 individuals with lung cancer attended psychoeducational lung cancer workshops across the U.S., and 350 (78% response rate) completed a workshop evaluation. Attendees reported their treatments to-date as well as the factors that influenced their decision-making. The workshop outcomes of patient knowledge and empowerment were also assessed in the evaluation. Descriptive analyses were conducted. Additionally, differences between metastatic and non-metastatic patients were reported.

## Objectives

- To investigate factors influencing treatment decisions in individuals diagnosed with lung cancer
- To investigate whether a psychoeducational workshop emphasizing patient empowerment would facilitate gains in knowledge and facilitate decision-making
- To examine the role of disease stage in decision-making

## Program Background

The *Frankly Speaking About Cancer* (FSAC) series provides in-depth coverage of topics relevant to those affected by cancer that are often not otherwise available. Programs include:

- Your Immune System & Cancer Treatment
- Metastatic Breast Cancer
- Breast Reconstruction
- Lung Cancer
- Treatments & Side Effects
- New Discoveries
- Coping with the Cost of Care
- Multiple Myeloma



Programs are delivered via:

- Digital
- Print
- Online radio series
- Professionally-led workshops

## 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. As the largest, professionally led nonprofit network of cancer support worldwide, CSC delivers essential services including support groups, educational workshops, exercise, art and nutrition classes, and social activities for the entire family. For more information: 1-888-793-9355; www.cancersupportcommunity.org

## Methods

FSAC Lung Cancer workshop attendees in 2012-13 were offered a paper & pencil-based post-workshop evaluation. Of 1326 attendees, 1038 completed evaluations (response rate= 78%).

348 workshop attendees (35.4% of all attendees) were lung cancer patients; the remainder were family/friend caregivers and medical professionals. The following analyses focus exclusively on the responses of individuals diagnosed with lung cancer.

### Respondents: (n =348)

Average Age = 64.5 years

65.5% female

Racial background:

- 81.9% Caucasian
- 9.4% African-American
- 4.7% Asian
- 4.1% Hispanic

### Cancer History:

- 46.7% first diagnosed within the past year
- 39.1% diagnosed between 1-5 years ago
- 14.3% diagnosed over 5 years ago
- 46.0% diagnosed with metastatic disease

## Survey Questions

### Workshop Outcome: Treatment Decision-Making

As a result of this workshop:

- I have a better understanding of what questions to ask my health care team in order to make treatment decisions
- I am confident I can speak knowledgeably with my health care team about side effects of cancer and its treatment
- I feel that I am better able to make a treatment decision with my health care team in order to get the kind of care that best suits my needs

### Treatments

What kind of treatment have you received/currently receiving? (check all)

- Surgery
- Targeted Therapy/Biologic
- Chemotherapy
- Complimentary/Alternative Therapy
- Radiation
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

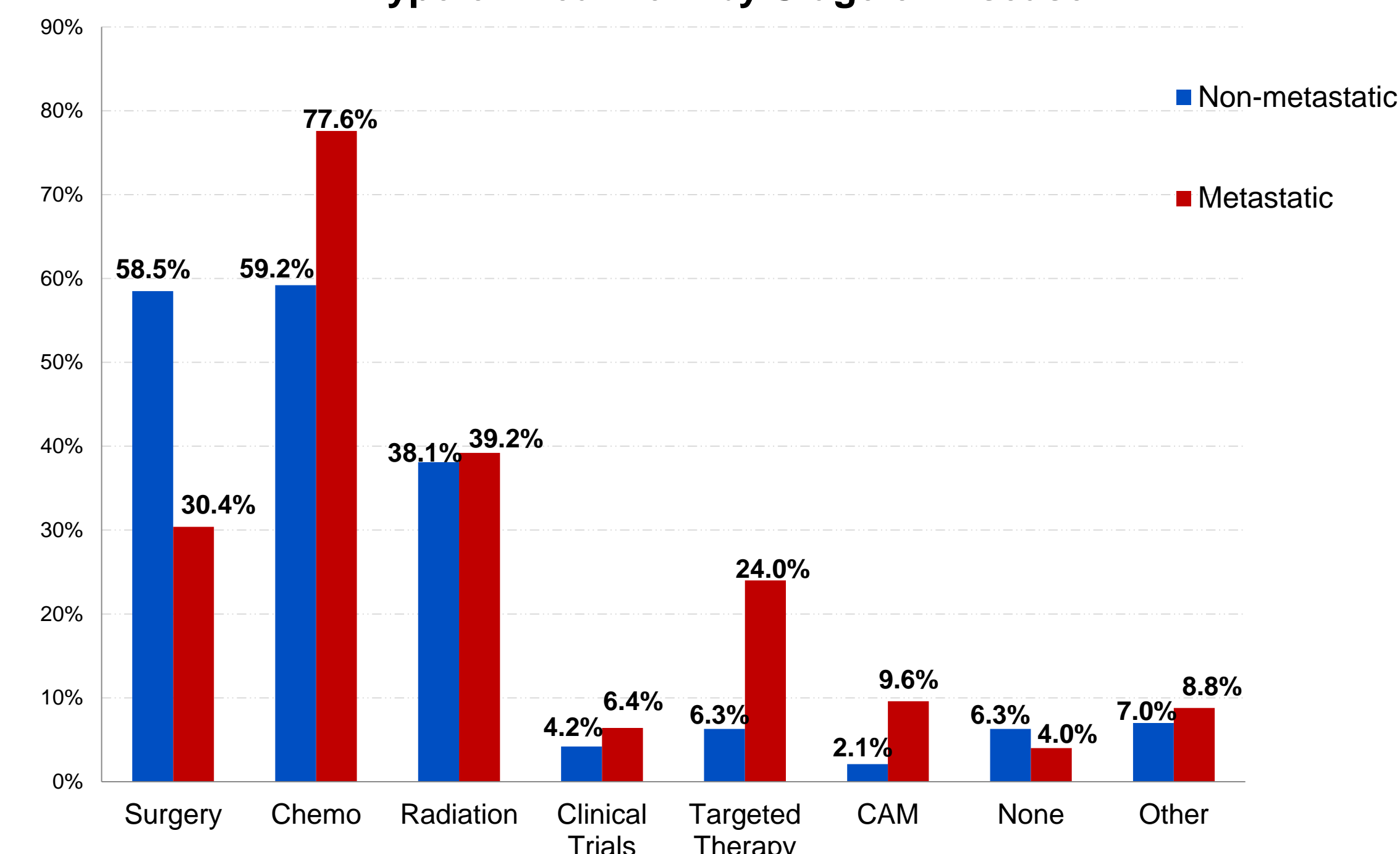
### Treatment Options

Please select the statement(s) below that BEST describe why you chose the treatment you did. (check all)

- It seemed to have fewer side effects than other treatments
- It was part of a clinical trial
- Because of insurance/ financial reasons
- My doctor said it was the best treatment for me
- Because of the ease/convenience of the treatment
- It was the most aggressive treatment available
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Treatment Types

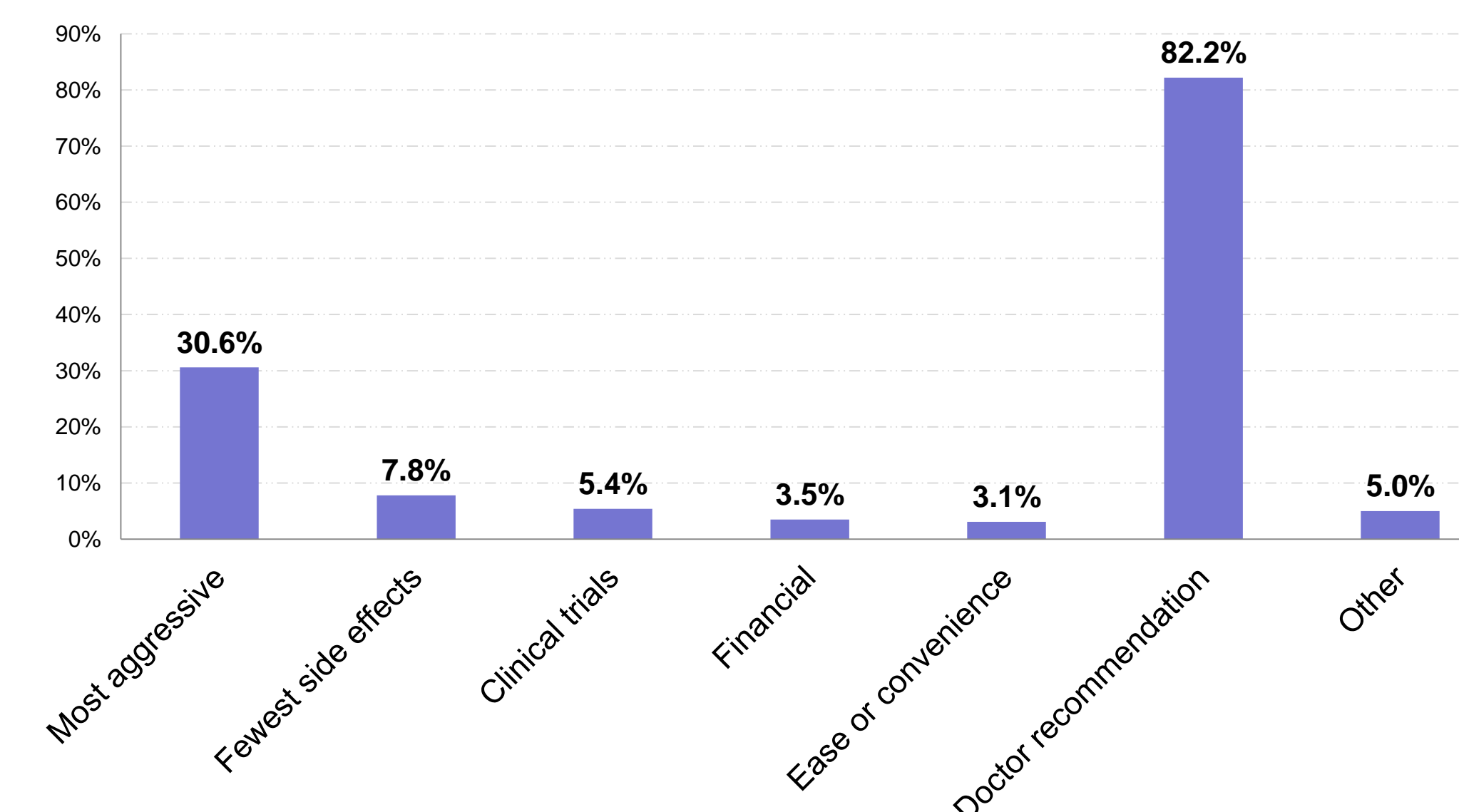
Type of Treatment by Stage of Disease



- Overall, patients reported having chemotherapy (67%), radiation (40.7%), surgery (45.3%), targeted therapy (14.4%), and 5.6% participated in clinical trials
- Differences between those with metastatic disease and those with earlier stage disease emerged:
  - Surgery was more common among those with earlier stage disease ( $p < .01$ )
  - Targeted therapies, chemotherapy, clinical trials, and complementary and alternative medicine were more common in those with metastatic disease ( $p < .01$ )
- "Other" treatment type most typically was cyber-knife

## Treatment Options & Decision-Making

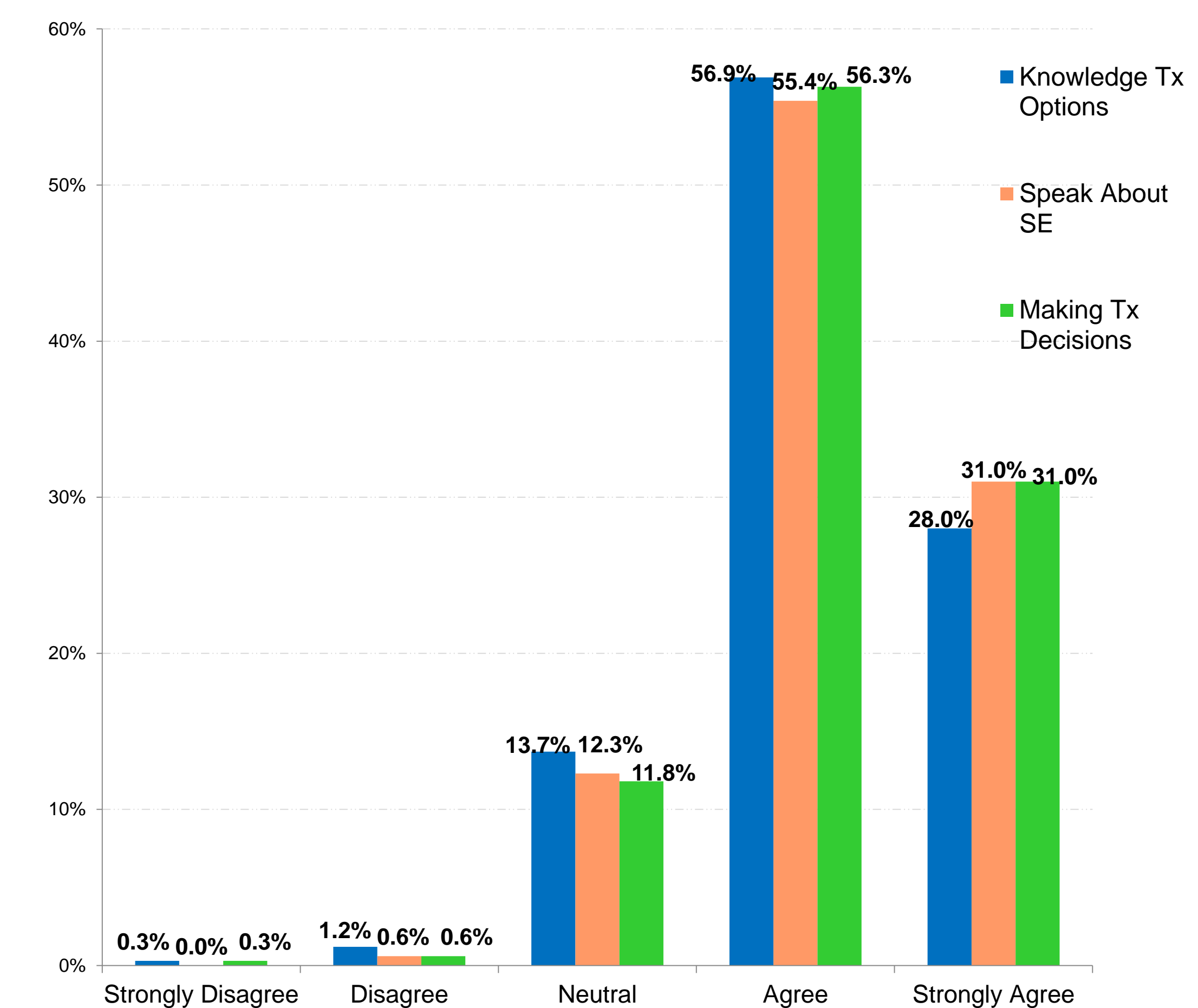
Reasons Endorsed for Treatment Decisions



- Overwhelmingly, patients reported the most significant factor in choosing their treatment plan was receiving a physician recommendation (82.6%)
- Other factors noted frequently in treatment-planning included: it being the most aggressive treatment available (30.4%), having the fewest side effects (7.2%), it was part of a clinical trial (5.4%), and the ease or convenience of treatment (3.3%)
- Worthy of note, 10.4% reported that their treatment plan was the only treatment option available to them
- No significant differences between stage of disease were found in reasons for treatment decision-making

## Workshop-Related Outcomes

- Nearly all (91.5%) reported knowledge of treatment options had improved post-workshop
- Most reported improved confidence making treatment decisions (87.5%) and speaking about side effects (86.4%) with their health care team



## Summary

- Most patients underwent chemotherapy, surgery, or radiation, though many other types of treatments were reported
- There were differences in treatment by stage of disease of respondents
- Despite these differences, there were no differences in factors affecting decision making based on stage of disease
- Overwhelmingly, patients reported the most significant factor in choosing their treatment plan was receiving a physician recommendation, when patients were given treatment options
- Nearly all reported improvements in knowledge of treatment options post-workshop, as well as more confidence in making treatment decisions with their health care team

## Discussion

- Physician recommendation is the primary driver in treatment decision-making in lung cancer, regardless of stage of disease, though multiple factors contribute to decision-making.
- Participants in this program indicated that having up-to-date and comprehensive educational materials may significantly aid decision-making and confidence in patient-provider communication
- Psychoeducational programs such as the current program have the potential to empower and inform patients during the treatment decision-making process

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