

ASCO Annual Meeting: June 3-7, 2016

Cancer patient experience with financial counseling among participants of an online registry

Buzaglo, J.S., Miller, M.F., Karten, C., Longacre, M., LeBlanc, T.W., Schapmire, T.J., Zafar S.Y.

Background: As many as 1 in 5 cancer patients can't afford treatment as prescribed. Along with longer-term policy and cost interventions, short-term solutions like financial counseling may reduce patient costs. We described the patient experience with financial counseling and examined the relationship with financial impact. **Methods:** From April-Nov 2015, 496 cancer survivors joined the Cancer Experience Registry and answered questions about financial counseling. Using a 5-point Likert scale, respondents indicated the extent of their financial impact from cancer. We defined financial counseling as (1) speaking to a professional about cost of care (yes/no) and (2) satisfaction with how much your doctor/health care team spoke about financial costs of each treatment (satisfied=quite a bit, very much; not satisfied=not at all, a little bit). We used descriptive statistics and chi-square tests to analyze results. **Results:** Median age was 60 y; 78% were female, 91% Caucasian, 50% employed part- or full-time, 38% annual income <\$60K, 34% ≥\$100K. Diagnoses included breast (47%), CLL (10%), prostate (5%), lung (4%). 24% of respondents spoke to a professional about costs, specifically: financial counselors (32%); nurse navigators (26%); or physicians (27%). 33% were satisfied with how much their health care team spoke about costs. 65% were satisfied with their doctor's explanation of risks and side effects, and 70% with discussion of treatment benefits. Merely speaking with a professional about cost did not change financial impact, but those who reported satisfaction with financial counseling reported less financial impact of cancer (chi2=22.6, p<0.001). Timing of discussion was associated with patient satisfaction (chi2=8.8, p=0.033, see table).

	Satisfied	Not satisfied
	%	%
At diagnosis	15	14
Before treatment	76	53
During treatment	9	31
After treatment	0	3

Conclusion: Only a minority of patients spoke with a professional about costs. Merely speaking with one's health care team about cost did not reduce the financial impact of cancer but satisfaction with financial counseling did. Studies on effects of discussion frequency, duration, and timing could result in best practices to reduce financial burden for cancer patients.

Sponsors for the Registry: Genentech, Lilly Oncology, Celgene, Amgen, Janssen, Phamacyclics, Takeda Oncology, Boehringer Ingelheim, Pfizer, Bayer, Bristol-Myers Squibb.