

Patient Interest In Clinical Trials: Results From A National Sample Of Cancer Psychoeducational Program Attendees

Allison Harvey, MPH, CHES, Marni Amsellem, Ph.D., and Rhea Suarez
Cancer Support Community, Washington D.C.

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Background & Rationale

According to a 2012 general population survey, only 8.3% of Americans with cancer reported that their physician spoke with them about participation in a clinical trial (HINTS). Individuals undergoing cancer treatment may be eligible for clinical trials, yet many are unaware of their eligibility. As clinical trial participation is essential for conducting research on new cancer treatments, the medical community must find ways to increase awareness of and participation in clinical trials.

Assessing openness to clinical trials and identifying factors associated with openness can inform cancer clinical trial patient education efforts. One goal of the Cancer Support Community's (CSC) *Frankly Speaking About Cancer* (FSAC) psychoeducational programs is to empower attendees to take an active role in their treatment decision-making, which includes awareness about participating in clinical trials. The current analyses investigate patient factors associated with interest in discussing clinical trials with their health care team.

Frankly Speaking About Cancer 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 in a comprehensive format. Topics covered include: metastatic breast cancer, lung cancer, cancer treatments and side effects and coping with the cost of care. *Frankly Speaking About Cancer* is delivered through multiple modalities, including in-person workshops, publications, online and radio show.

Objectives

- To investigate the effectiveness of a psychoeducational program in generating interest in discussing clinical trial options
- To investigate patient characteristics associated with interest in discussing clinical trials for cancer treatment with their healthcare team

Synopsis of Findings

2,931 individuals with cancer who attended a psychoeducational workshop at a CSC affiliate responded to questions assessing interest in clinical trials. After attending the workshop, 66.2% reported intending to consider clinical trials, despite the finding that only 7.5% had participated in one to date.

Methods

From 2009-2013, 8,928 attendees of a FSAC workshop taking place within CSC's Affiliate Network completed post-workshop evaluations (75% response rate).

Of the respondents, 5,419 (61.1%) were diagnosed with cancer. Workshop evaluations from almost all FSAC programs assessed interest in clinical trials as a result of the workshop. Clinical trial data are available from 2,931 patients.

Respondents:

Data on interest in clinical trials were analyzed from 2,931 cancer survivors who attended FSAC workshops across the U.S. from 2009-2013

Clinical Trial survey items:

- "As a result of attending this workshop, I am going to ask my healthcare team about whether a clinical trial may be appropriate to me." (on a 5-pt scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree")
- Participation in clinical trials (yes/no)

Other survey items included in analyses:

- Pre and post workshop topic knowledge (on 5-pt scale)
- Workshop satisfaction/ recommend workshop (5-pt scale)
- Confidence about asking questions to health care team (on 5-pt scale)
- Confidence about making treatment decisions with health care team (on 5-pt scale)
- Current support group participation (yes/no)

Respondent Characteristics

Background Characteristics:

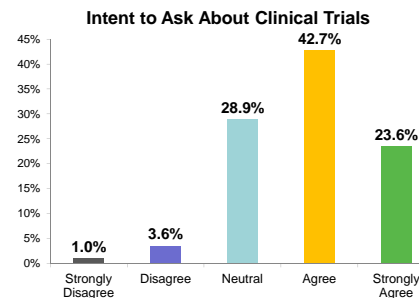
- Average Age = 60 years (s.d.=11.3 years)
- Sex: 81.4% female
- Racial Identification:
 - 80.4% Caucasian
 - 8.6% African-American
 - 4.1% Asian
 - 4.1% Hispanic

Cancer History:

- 35.5% first diagnosed within the past year
- 41.6% diagnosed between 1-5 years ago
- 22.8% diagnosed over 5 years ago
- 52.1% had breast cancer
- 37.3% had metastatic disease

Clinical Trials

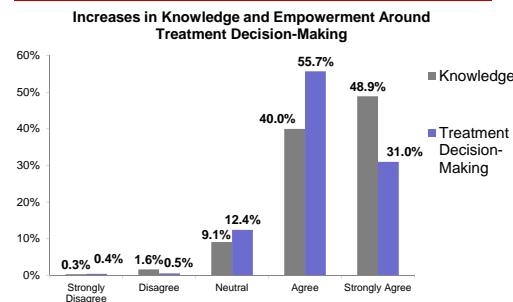
- 7.5% of respondents had participated in a clinical trial
- One workshop goal was to educate about treatment and care options, such as clinical trials. Results indicate success on this outcome



Associations with Intention to Discuss Clinical Trials

- Age was negatively correlated with intention to ask about trials $r = -.08$
- Many workshop outcomes were positively correlated with intention to ask about trials, including ($p < .05$ for all)
 - Post-workshop knowledge of topic, $r = .15$
 - Workshop satisfaction, $r = .27$
 - Confidence about making treatment decisions, $r = .37$
 - Confidence about asking questions to healthcare team $r = .35$
- No differences in intent to discuss were found based on type of cancer, workshop type, time since diagnosis, race, gender, or support group participation

Other Outcomes



- 96% reported recommending attending a workshop to others

Summary & Discussion

- Results suggest that psychoeducational workshops that address clinical trial participation can increase interest in investigating one's clinical trial eligibility and discussing options with one's health care team.
- Patient programs which educate patients about clinical trials (among other educational outcomes), engage patients on other dimensions of patient empowerment, and are generally well-received programs are associated with increased interest in clinical trial participation.
- Patients who are most likely going to discuss trial participation with their health care team are younger. These results suggest the need to investigate additional strategies to engage older populations in the education about and discussion of clinical trials.

Implications

Increased understanding of factors can inform future efforts to raise awareness of and possible enrollment in clinical trials.

Research implications

There is ongoing research on how to increase cancer clinical trial participation. These findings contribute to this body of work and identify areas for further research.

Practice Implications

These findings highlight a successful psychoeducational model, which can be incorporated into clinical practice with patients and caregivers.

References

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National Cancer Institute. (2012). *Health Information National Trends Survey (HINTS)*, http://hints.cancer.gov/question-details.aspx?PK_Cycle=5&qid=1333.

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