CONCERNS AROUND PAIN, TREATMENT DECISION-MAKING, 'FINDING MEANING' LINKED TO HIGHER LEVELS OF DISTRESS AMONG PATIENTS AT RISK FOR DEPRESSION

The Cancer Support Community presents clinical research with implications for patient care at National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) annual meeting

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. – (Mar. 31, 2016) – Among patients who are at risk for depression, those who indicated high concerns around pain, making a treatment decision, and 'finding meaning' were significantly more likely to be experiencing higher levels of distress than those who were still at risk for depression but were experiencing lower levels of distress, according to research presented today by the Cancer Support Community, an international nonprofit, at the annual meeting of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network.

For example, among patients who were at risk for depression, 96 percent of those who had the highest distress levels said they were moderately to very seriously concerned about pain, compared to only 24 percent of people who were at risk for depression but had lower distress levels. This data suggests that pain may be a factor to determine urgency in referral to appropriate care post distress screening.

By contrast, in other items, such as "worrying about the future," patients who had overall high and low distress had similar levels of concern, indicating that this item is less likely to distinguish patients with high distress from those with lower distress.

"Stressors can exacerbate depression and leave patients vulnerable for poorer health outcomes and quality of life. Resources should be in place to support patients through pain management, treatment decision-making, and spirituality," said Joanne Buzaglo, Ph.D., senior vice president of research and training at the Cancer Support Community. "For practices that are working hard to meet the psychosocial needs of cancer patients, these findings suggest that innovative approaches designed to streamline identification of those at greatest risk of depression and overall distress and poorer outcomes need to be developed, implemented and tested, and that these approaches could potentially be effective in managing workflow while increasing quality of care."

Researchers also found that patients from households earning less than $40,000 a year were twice as likely to be depressed than those from households earning more than $100,000, and that Latinos were almost twice as likely than Caucasians to be at risk for depression.

The study was conducted among 842 patients of Cancer Support Community affiliates across the U.S. who participated in a web-based distress screening tool, CancerSupportSource®.

The American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer and the National Comprehensive Cancer Network recommend distress screening for all cancer patients.

More details of the study can be found [here](#).

About the Cancer Support Community

As the largest professionally led nonprofit network of cancer support worldwide, the Cancer Support Community (CSC) 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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