

Educating Cancer Patients about Immunotherapy: Gains from Attending a National Educational Immunotherapy Workshop

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Background

- While immunotherapy continues to offer promising treatments for many tumor types, often patients eligible for immunotherapy are not aware of options.
- According to a 2014 Cancer Support Community (CSC) online survey, only 34.8% of cancer survivors knew the term “immuno-oncology” and 64.9% had heard of “immunotherapy.” Despite low awareness, most (84%) wanted to know more about these topics¹.
- Recognizing this need, the CSC developed a national psychoeducational immunotherapy workshop.

Aims

- To investigate how the *Frankly Speaking About Cancer: Your Immune System & Cancer Treatment* psychoeducational program was received by attendees with cancer.
- To assess the program’s informational and empowerment (e.g. confidence) outcomes among attendees with cancer.

Methods

- Between 2014-2016, 706 workshop attendees from CSC’s *Frankly Speaking About Cancer: Your Immune System & Cancer Treatment* workshop completed a post-workshop evaluation.
- Attendees came from CSC’s nationwide affiliate network and were given the opportunity to complete a workshop evaluation at the end of the 2-hour program (75% response rate).
- The evaluation assessed knowledge (1 = *not at all*; 5 = *very much*) and program outcomes, including workshop satisfaction, in addition to demographics.
- Descriptive analyses and ANOVAs were used to assess participant characteristics, participant experience with immunotherapy and workshop outcomes for the 478 attendees with cancer.

Frankly Speaking About Cancer (FSAC) Series

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. Programs represent the most up-to-date content, delivered via the Internet, print materials, online radio series, and professionally-led workshops held nationwide.

Programs include:

- Metastatic Breast Cancer
- Clinical Trials
- Lung Cancer
- Coping with the Cost of Care
- Melanoma
- Immunotherapy
- Cancer Treatment & Side Effects
- New Discoveries
- Colorectal Cancer
- Breast Reconstruction



Results

Participant Characteristics

N = 478 individuals diagnosed with cancer	%
Age (Mean, SD)	62.8 (12.8)
Non-Hispanic White	81.7%
Female	79.6%
Cancer experience	
Diagnosed with cancer (of total attendees)	68.0%
Metastatic disease (of those with cancer)	35.1%
Diagnosed in the past year	26.6%

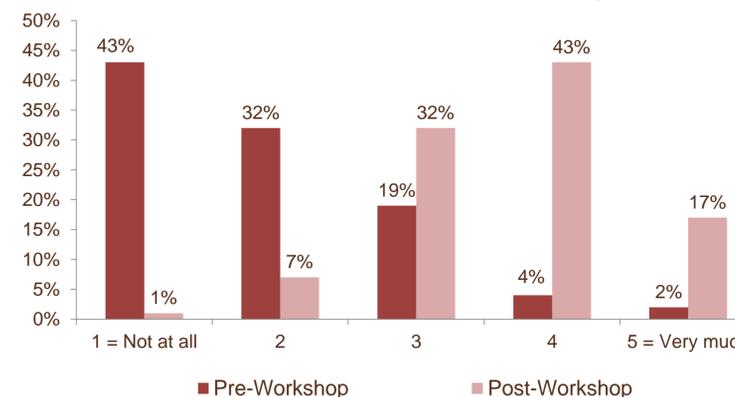
Immunotherapy as a Treatment Option

- 23.3% of attendees with cancer reported that immunotherapy was a treatment option for them.
- 9.2% reported having undergone or undergoing immunotherapy.
- While over half of workshop attendees with cancer (53%) reported generally being very involved in their overall treatment decision-making, 47% were unsure whether immunotherapy had been a treatment option for them.

Workshop Satisfaction

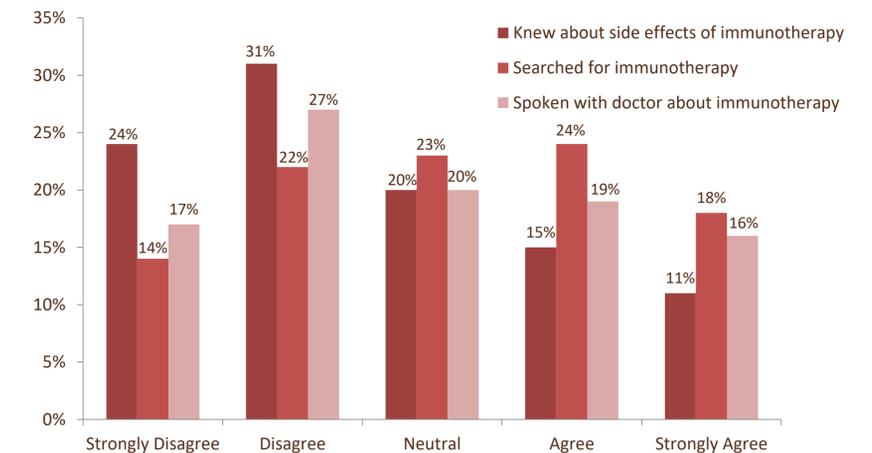
- For nearly half of attendees with cancer (39.5%), this was the first psychoeducational workshop attended.
- 93% of attendees reported that they would recommend this workshop to others affected by cancer facing similar challenges.

Workshop-Specific Knowledge



- The majority of attendees (75%) reported low immunotherapy knowledge (“1” or “2” on 5-point scale) before the workshop.
- After the workshop, most attendees with cancer (60%) reported high knowledge of immunotherapy (“4” or “5” on 5-point scale), representing a significant gain from attending the program (F (4,416) = 39.2, p < .01).

Before Workshop: Immunotherapy Experience

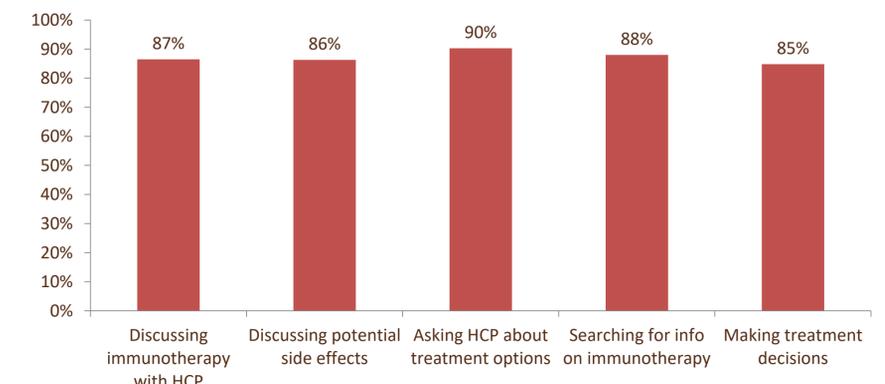


Before attending the workshop:

- 36.8% had spoken with their doctor about immunotherapy.
- 26.2% had inquired about potential side effects of immunotherapy.
- 44.1% had searched for information about immunotherapy.

After Workshop: Increased confidence

% Endorsing “More Confident” after attending workshop



Implications and Conclusions

- A comprehensive face-to-face workshop focused on immunotherapy for cancer patients is well-received by attendees, and can educate and facilitate communication about immunotherapy.
- Results from the attendee evaluations demonstrate significant informational and confidence gains from attending a two-hour psychoeducational workshop.
- Results suggest that improving access to comprehensive information about immunotherapy and promoting communication between the patient and the health care team about treatment options and decision-making via an educational workshop is viable and can be implemented nationally to reach many who are affected by cancer.

Acknowledgments

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References

¹ Cancer Support Community, *Frankly Speaking About Cancer: Immuno-Oncology Survey*, Online Survey, May 2014.