

For Immediate Release**Breast Cancer Patients and Oncologists Highly Satisfied with Communication, Yet Disagree on Conversation Priorities***New Survey from Leading Breast Cancer Organization Suggests Need to Define Issues of Personal Importance*

San Antonio, December 16, 2007 – Seventy-two percent of breast cancer patients and nearly 60 percent of oncologists report overall satisfaction with the quality of their communication, yet there is a wide gap between what doctors and patients think is important to discuss, according to a new survey commissioned by Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization™ (Y-ME). The survey findings were presented today at the 30th Annual San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium (SABCS).

Surveyed patients and oncologists had very different perspectives on which aspects of care should be the focus of their conversations, such as prognosis and issues relating to treatment (long-term effects, risks and benefits, and side effects). Whereas patients placed the greatest priority on their prognosis (47 percent), oncologists focused most on side effects (59 percent) – a topic that only 34 percent of patients considered essential. 57 percent of doctors, compared with 42 percent of patients, said that the risks and benefits of treatment were among the most important discussion topics. And, nearly 40% of patients considered the long-term effects of treatment to be a very important discussion topic; however, only nine percent of oncologists agreed.

Interestingly, patients were more inclined than oncologists to report that their most important discussion with their oncologist was very successful (80 percent compared with 67 percent).

“We were very encouraged to learn that breast cancer patients and oncologists are generally pleased with their communication,” says Margaret C. Kirk, CEO of Y-ME. “But since the survey shows that they have different priorities and levels of satisfaction, there's definitely room for improvement.”

The survey also found that:

- Patients generally feel satisfied with the level of information they receive, specifically regarding how informed they are about their treatment and their disease (75 and 71 percent, respectively). However, only 38 percent of oncologists said they are very satisfied with how informed their patients are about their treatments and 34 percent of oncologists are satisfied with how informed their patients are about their disease.
- 66 percent of patients said they speak with their oncologist less than once a month compared to 72 percent of oncologists who say they speak with a typical patient at least twice per month.

“This survey reinforces the need for patients and oncologists to recognize their different perspectives and define the goals of each interaction,” says Margaret Kirk. “Mutual understanding of these goals is an important step toward improved communication, quality of care and, ultimately, patient outcomes.”

Survey Background, Method and Design

The purpose of this survey was to better understand barriers to effective doctor-patient relationships and to develop best practice standards for their interactions. Y-ME commissioned The Segmentation Company, a division of Yankelovich, to conduct this research.

Online interviews were conducted among 504 breast cancer patients and 150 oncologists. Patients were defined as women over 18 who are currently being treated for breast cancer. Only oncologists seeing at least 10 breast cancer patients per week and having been in practice for at least three years were included in the study. Interviews were conducted online from May 3 through May 16, 2007. The patient sample was weighted to reflect the occurrence of breast cancer in certain demographic groups as reported by the National Center for Health Statistics, "Summary Health Statistics for U.S. Adults: National Health Interview Survey, 2005."

The majority of surveyed patients was Caucasian, between 48 and 64 years of age, and had stage I or II breast cancer. Patients were evenly distributed among education and income levels. The majority of oncologists were male (81 percent), older than 40 years of age and worked in a single specialty practice or partnership.

This survey was made possible with support from Roche.

About Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization

Y-ME's mission is to ensure, through information, empowerment and peer support, that no one faces breast cancer alone. Y-ME does not raise money for research but is here today for those who can't wait for tomorrow's cure.

Y-ME has the only 24-hour hotline staffed entirely by trained breast cancer survivors. The pink ribbon logo is inverted because it forms the "Y" in Y-ME. Also, we are "where to turn when your world turns upside down" by a breast cancer diagnosis.

Y-ME is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, and annual reports and 990s are available online at www.y-me.org. Y-ME meets all of the National Health Council's 41 Standards of Excellence, best practices that encompass the areas of governance, personnel policies, programs finance, fundraising, accounting and reporting, and evaluation.

For breast cancer support or information including publications and newsletters, visit www.y-me.org or call the Y-ME National Breast Cancer Hotline at 1-800-221-2141 (English, with interpreters available in 150 languages) or 1-800-986-9505 (Spanish).

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