The Effect of Income on Prostate Cancer Patient's Satisfaction, Awareness and Discussion Levels of Treatment Options

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SUMMARY:

During September 2003, over 4,500 NexCura and Us TOO International prostate cancer patients and caregivers were surveyed about their experiences with prostate cancer. This survey focused on investigating these patients’ and caregivers’ level of information about various prostate cancer issues and treatment options as well as their satisfaction with their treatment decisions. Higher levels of income corresponded with higher levels of information, likelihood of having had a second opinion, and satisfaction with treatment decisions.

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE:

Prostate cancer patients and their caregivers make important decisions about their treatment and face serious challenges in deciding on the best treatment option. Various factors, including income, can affect access to available information and influence the prostate cancer patient’s choices. Income as a stratifying factor was evaluated for prostate cancer patients and caregivers in relation to their experiences with treatment decisions.

MATERIALS/METHODS:

Population:
- Registrants of NexCura’s online NexProfiler Treatment Option Tool for Prostate Cancer
- Individuals from the database of Us TOO International

Sample:
- Patients and caregivers were invited by e-mail to participate in an online survey
- 4,857 individuals filled out an online survey in August 2003

Topics:
Levels of awareness, discussion with medical professionals, and satisfaction with treatment decisions were then analyzed to determine if income was a factor that affected their experiences.

RESULTS:

Levels of Information:
Survey respondents were asked to describe how well informed they felt about a series of topics related to prostate cancer. These topics included different issues important to understanding prostate cancer as well as the treatments available. The percentage of individuals who felt either “very well informed” or “well informed” corresponded with higher income levels.

INCOME RANGE:

Which range represents your total annual household income before taxes? (United States dollars)

SATISFACTION WITH TREATMENT DECISION:
Survey respondents were also asked a series of questions to determine their level of satisfaction with their experiences. These included a question as to whether or not an individual received a second opinion and how they now feel about their treatment decisions. Higher income levels corresponded with better experiences for prostate cancer patients in all categories.

CONCLUSIONS:

Income levels may affect access to available prostate cancer information. A more focused effort must be made to improve the education and available information for prostate cancer patients from lower income levels. Large online databases of cancer patients may provide substantial opportunity for prostate cancer research.

SPONSORS:

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