

Influence of Tumor Type, Disease Status, and Patient Age on Self-Reported Interest Regarding Participation in Cancer Clinical Trials

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Background:

One critically important element in the process of anti-cancer drug development that has been shown to substantially hinder the evaluation of new approaches is the profoundly small proportion of cancer patients in the United States (estimated to be less than 4 percent) who actually enter a clinical trial. This is a serious problem with no simple solutions. There is limited data available regarding the reasons cancer patients decide to enter clinical trials. Are there distinct characteristics that may influence a cancer patient's desire to consider entry into a clinical research study? For example, are patients with one tumor type (e.g., lung versus colon cancer) or status of disease (e.g., newly diagnosed versus recurrent cancer) more likely to consider possible entry into a clinical trial? How much does a patient's age influence his/her willingness to even consider entry into a cancer clinical trial?

Methods:

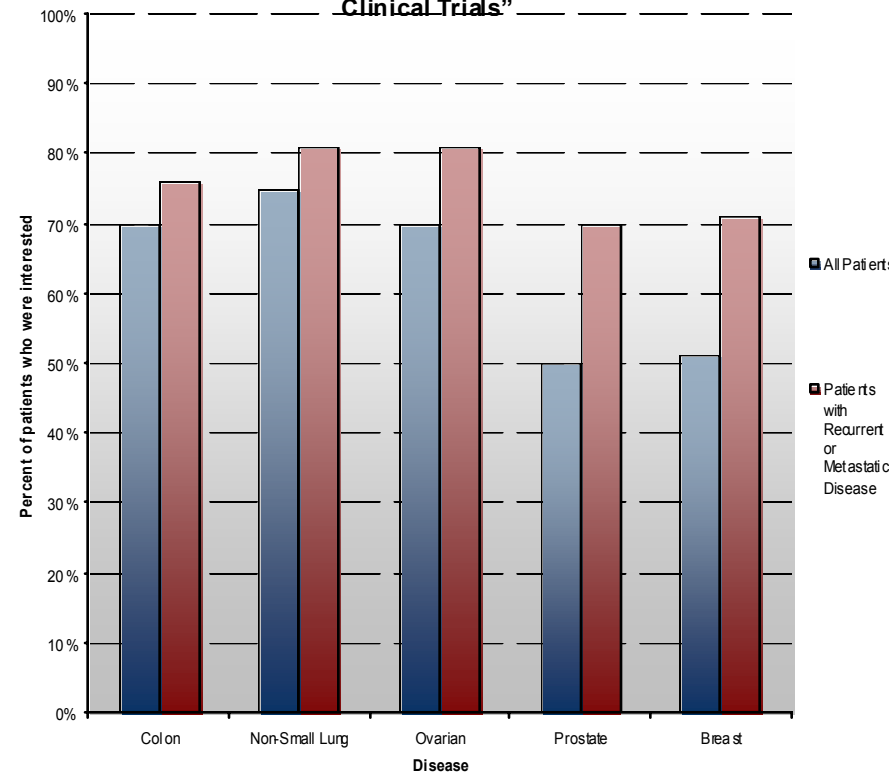
Since 2000, a proprietary decision support program (NexProfiler® Treatment Option Tools for Cancer, NexCura®, Inc. Seattle, WA, USA) has been embedded within approximately 100 established cancer-related Internet sites (e.g., American Cancer Society). Patients (approximately 2,000/week) enter general data regarding their medical histories into specific "disease profiles", and subsequently receive information describing evidence-based treatment options relevant for their particular clinical situation. The content of the programs have been developed by company employed clinical specialists working with a medical editorial board comprised of oncologists with recognized expertise in their respective areas.

Patients providing information, are informed that the data generated may be used in aggregate for research purposes. However, individual patient data will under no circumstances be provided to any external source.

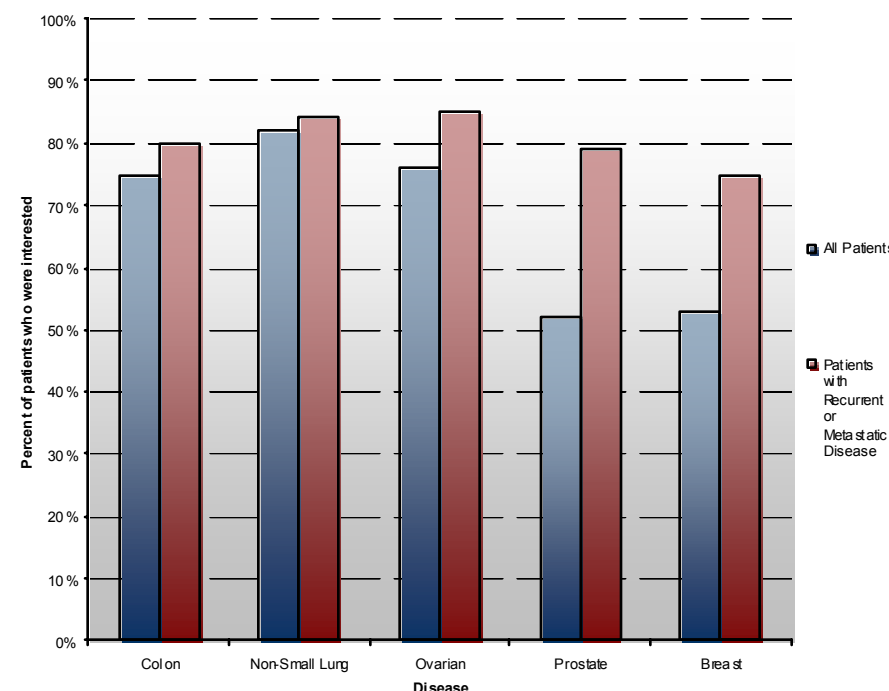
When patients (or their families) initially enter personal data a unique account is created employing an e-mail address and password, which are utilized each time the individual subsequently enters the site. This reduces the risk that a single patient's data will be counted more than once.

As one potential option for management of cancer is participation in a clinical trial, patients who provide information into one of the disease-specific decision-support tools are specifically asked if they would like to learn about clinical trials for their condition. The "yes" or "no" response to this question forms the basis for the current analysis.

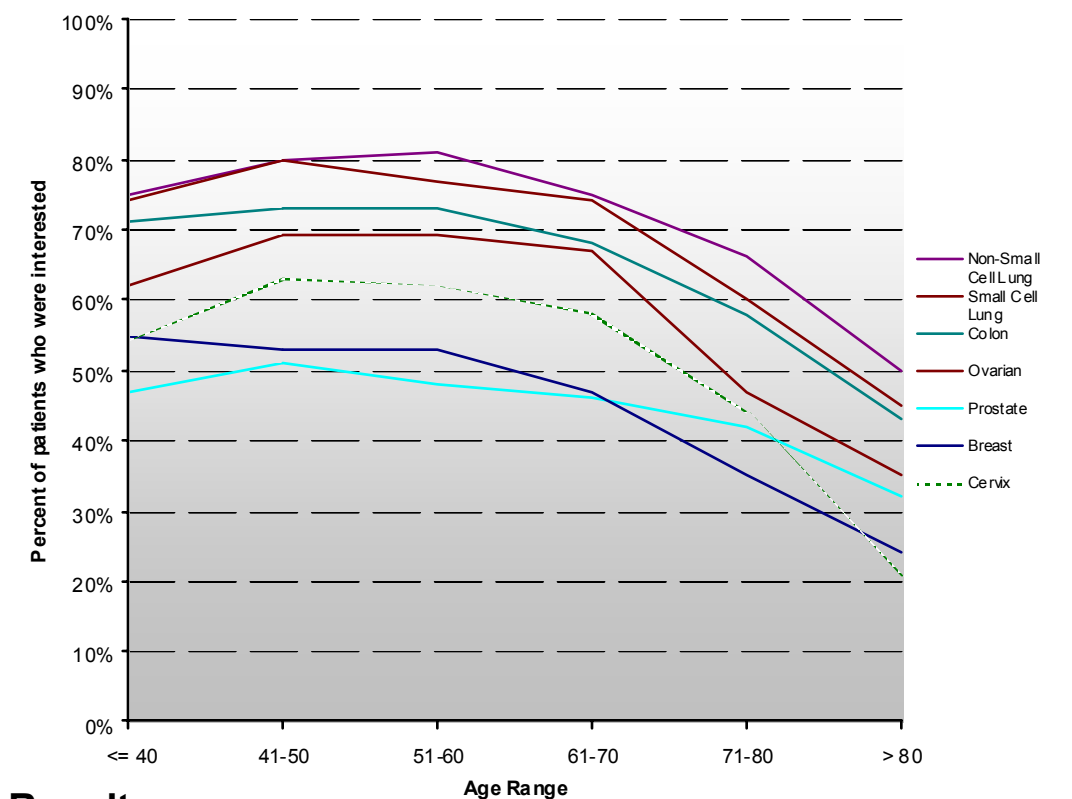
Influence of Tumor Type and Disease Status on the Percentage of ALL Patients Who Responded They "Would Be Interested in Learning About Clinical Trials"



Influence of Tumor Type and Disease Status on the Percentage of Patients aged 51-60 Who Responded They "Would Be Interested in Learning About Clinical Trials"



Influence of Age on the Percentage of Newly Diagnosed Patients Who Responded They "Would Be Interested in Learning About Clinical Trials"



Results:

The proportion of patients (or their families) who expressed interest in learning about clinical trials ranged from as low as 21% (endometrial and cervix cancer aged > 80; n=178) to as high as 85% (recurrent ovarian cancer patients, aged 51-60; n=842). Patients >80 years old, regardless of sex, tumor type, or disease status, were substantially less likely to desire such information. Patients with self-declared more "serious conditions" (e.g., metastatic breast [71%; n=5,444], recurrent prostate cancer [70%; n=4,121], and those with cancers widely known to have a poor prognosis (e.g., non-small cell lung cancer [75%; n=23,298]), were more likely to request data on trials, than those with an overall more "favorable" prognosis (e.g., newly diagnosed prostate cancer [46%; n=21,348]). There were no observed differences in interest between men and women with similar conditions.

Conclusion:

In this large database, major differences in self-expressed interest regarding availability of clinical trials were observed. Particularly notable were the reduced interest among the very elderly, and the increased interest by patients with the most serious cancer-related conditions.

Sponsor:

NEXCURATM

NexCura is a health care education and information company that develops proprietary, Web-based, clinical decision-support tools. You can find the NexProfiler Cancer Treatment Options Tools at www.cancerfacts.com and on many other cancer Websites. A Thomson business