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 making decisions for treatment.

MATERIALS/METHODS:

Population:

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

Survey:

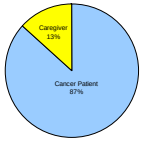
- Patients and caregivers were invited by e-mail to participate in an online survey
- 4,587 individuals filled out an online survey in Autumn 2003

Topics:

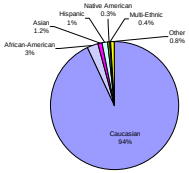
Levels of awareness, **discussions with medical professionals**, and **satisfaction with treatment decisions** were then analyzed to determine if **income** was a factor that affected their experience.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS:

Are you a prostate cancer patient OR are you responsible for a prostate cancer patient, such as a family member, friend, or caregiver?



To which racial or ethnic group do you belong?



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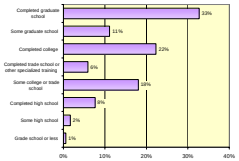
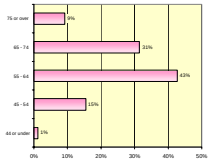
What was the last grade or level of school you completed?

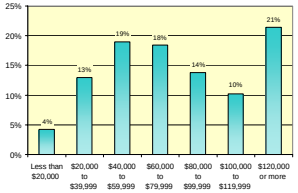


What is your current age?



INCOME RANGE:

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



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.

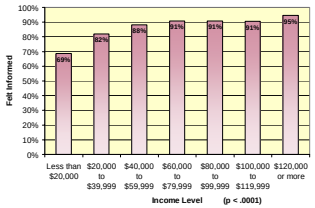
Subjects:

- Prostate Cancer in General
- Gleason Score
- "Watchful Waiting"

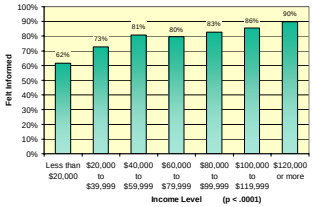
Potential Answers:

- Very well informed
- Well informed
- Somewhat informed
- Somewhat uninformed
- Very uninformed

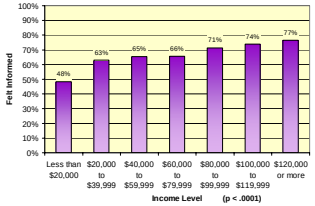
How well informed are you currently about prostate cancer in general?



How well informed are you currently about Gleason Score?



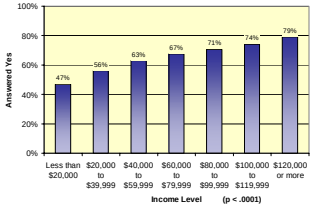
How well informed are you currently about "Watchful Waiting"?



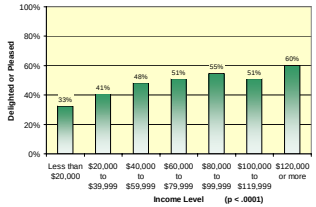
Satisfaction with Treatment Decision:

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 felt about their treatment decision. Higher income levels corresponded with better experiences for prostate cancer patients in all categories.

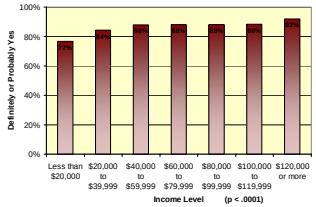
When making your decision about treatment options for prostate cancer, did you seek a second opinion?



Overall, how do you feel about how your treatment (or not getting treatment) for prostate cancer has worked out?



Would you make the same treatment decisions again if you had the chance?



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:

Seattle Prostate Institute
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