LUNG CANCER STIGMA
How Attitudes Affect the Treatment and Health of Survivors

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## DISCLOSURES

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<tr>
<th>Commercial Interest</th>
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<tr>
<td>AstraZeneca</td>
<td>Research Support</td>
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<td>Abbvie, Foundation Medicine, Genentech, Tesaro</td>
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<td>AstraZeneca, Genentech, Merck, Foundation Medicine, Thermo Fisher</td>
<td>Honoraria/Speaker Travel Expenses</td>
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<td>All were paid to GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer (formerly Lung Cancer Alliance)</td>
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Background: 2008

**PLACING THE LUNG CANCER BLAME**

*New National Survey Reveals*  
*Public Blames Lung Cancer Patients for Diagnosis*  
*Stigma Affects Support Services, Research Funding*

- A majority of the general population (59%) thinks that lung cancer patients are at least partly to blame for their illness

- Two scientific publications: Weiss et al. 2014, 2017
A Decade Later – Where Are We?

- Cross sectional view of public, patient, provider attitudes across a decade:
  - 2008 survey: 1071 general public, 204 patients, 206 oncologists
  - 2018 survey: 1001 general public, 208 patients, 205 oncologists

- Identical survey instrument and methodology

- Statistical Analysis: Compared 2008 and 2018 datasets using paired t-tests if normally distributed or Mann-Whitney U tests for continuous data and Chi-squared or Fisher’s exact test for categorical data.
Lung Cancer Awareness Has Increased in the Past Decade

- 94% of general public report being familiar with lung cancer in 2018 vs 82.5% in 2008 (p<.0.001)
- Familiarity with most cancers increased. Liver, brain, & lung were top three highest increases.
- Patients are increasing their use of advocacy groups (39% vs 18%, p<.0005)
When oncologists were asked about metastatic cancer types and if they had adequate treatment options to prolong patients’ lives and halt disease:

- Lung cancer: 52% “yes” vs 31% in 2008 (p<0.001)
- Breast cancer: 80% “yes” (no significant change)
Stigma Remains High

General Public:
- Lung cancer patients are at least partly to blame for their illness
  - 2008: 59%
  - 2018: 56%
- Lung cancer patients are viewed or treated differently than other cancer patients are
  - 2008: 31%
  - 2018: 37%

Oncologists:
- Lung cancer patients often blame themselves
  - 2008: 57%
  - 2018: 67%
- There is a stigma associated with lung cancer
  - 2008: 60%
  - 2018: 68%
- There is less stigma associated with lung cancer if the patient has never smoked
  - 2008: 59%
  - 2018: 72%
Patients are Perceiving More Stigma

- I feel there is a stigma associated with having lung cancer
  - 2008: 54%
  - 2018: 70%
  - p<0.001

- I feel lung cancer patients are viewed or treated differently than other cancer patients are
  - 2008: 47%
  - 2018: 54%
  - p<0.001

- I blame myself for developing lung cancer
  - 2008: 49%
  - 2018: 46%
  - p<0.001

- Strangers/acquaintances have said or done things that I felt were blaming me for my lung cancer
  - 2008: 31%
  - 2018: 51%
  - p<0.001

- My friends/family have said or done things that I felt were blaming me for my lung cancer
  - 2008: 21%
  - 2018: 29%

- I feel that my friends/family would be more supportive of me if I had a different type of cancer
  - 2008: 11%
  - 2018: 24%
  - p<0.001
Lung cancer patients are treated differently by society in general. In 2008, 45% of patients answered 'yes', and in 2018, 63% answered 'yes', with a p-value of <0.001 indicating a statistically significant difference.

Feel personally treated differently by society. In 2008, 23% of patients answered 'yes', and in 2018, 43% answered 'yes', with a p-value of <0.001 indicating a statistically significant difference.
Lung Cancer Patients Are Treated Differently by Providers

Patients were asked, “Do you feel that people with lung cancer are viewed or treated differently by physicians or nurses compared to people with other types of cancer?”

- 33% of patients said yes (no change from 2008)

Oncologists were asked, “Do you feel that patients with certain types of cancer are thought about, approached, or handled differently by physicians or nurses compared to patients with other types of cancer?”

- 57% of oncologists said yes (no change from 2008)
- Half cited lung cancer patients as handled differently
“In what ways are lung cancer patients treated/handled differently by physicians and nurses?”

- Doctors less likely to research alternative treatment options:
  - Patients: 46%
  - Oncologists: 31%

- Patients are given fewer educational materials:
  - Patients: 48%
  - Oncologists: 28%

- Medical staff spends less time with patient:
  - Patients: 41%
  - Oncologists: 28%

- Lack of sympathy among medical staff:
  - Patients: 58%
  - Oncologists: 55%
Take Home Messages

• After a decade of significant research progress in lung cancer, stigma and blame remain major problems

• Patients are perceiving higher levels of stigma than a decade ago

• Stigma surrounding the disease remains a critical problem even in a healthcare setting.

• We all need to work collaboratively as a community to reduce stigma and support patients with lung cancer.
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