

One in 10 People in Clinical Trials Worry About Paying for Medications

Researchers found that one in 10 patients participating in a clinical trial for colorectal cancer were concerned about paying for necessary supportive medications. Supportive medications include drugs to manage side effects from chemotherapy, treat infections, and/or reduce pain. This study also showed that patients rarely talked with their doctors about the cost of paying for medications.

What this means for patients

“If cost is a concern, it is important that patients and families talk with their doctors early on, because there may be options that can help reduce some of the costs,” said lead author Deborah Schrag, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. “With more people becoming uninsured or underinsured while the cost of prescription drugs rises, we could see growing anxiety among people with cancer about their ability to pay for medications that may help them continue their therapy. Patients treated outside of a clinical trial may have a harder time affording their supportive medications.”

The cost of cancer treatment was covered by the clinical trial for patients in this study. Although, the cost of supportive medications was not covered by the clinical trial, most patients were not worried about the cost. However, some people with cancer who are not being treated in a clinical trial may be more likely to worry about paying for cancer treatment. People who aren't concerned about how they will pay for cancer care are more likely to take their medications as prescribed.

What to Ask Your Doctor

- What type of treatment will I need?
- What are the side effects? How can these be managed?
- If I'm worried about managing the costs related to my cancer care, who can help me with these concerns?

For More Information

[Listen \[1\]](#) to Dr. Deborah Schrag discuss this study during the May 14, 2009 presscast

[Managing the Cost of Cancer Care \[2\]](#)

[Clinical Trials \[3\]](#)

Links:

[1] http://www.asco.org/ASCOv2/Department%20Content/Communications/Downloads/May14Presscast%20Dr_Schrag.mp3

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Managing+the+Cost+of+Cancer+Care>

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Clinical+Trials>