



Consumer Perspectives of Access to Cancer Medicines: A Mixed Methods Study

Jessica Pace

PhD Candidate, Sydney Health Ethics, The University of Sydney; Clinical Pharmacist, Central Coast Local Health District

BACKGROUND AND AIMS

- Number policy approaches address concerns regarding timely access to cancer medicines
- Increase both treatment options and uncertainty regarding safety, efficacy and cost-effectiveness → risks to patients, costs to communities
- Stakeholder engagement to ensure appropriate balance between risks and benefits
- Aim: explore consumer beliefs and values regarding approval and funding of new cancer medicines

METHODS

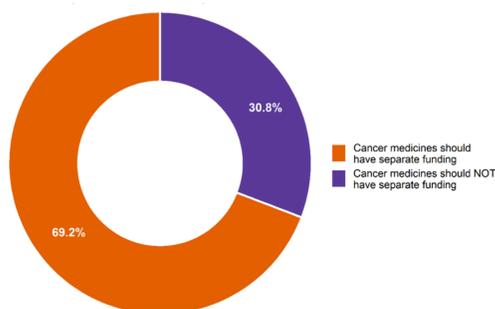
- 59-item **telephone survey** conducted August 2018
 - 1039 participants representative of broader population
 - Fixed choice responses- tallied and proportions calculated
- 13 **semi-structured interviews** with patients/patient advocates; two **focus groups** with patients
 - Audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, analysed thematically

RESULTS

- **Survey** indicates considerable enthusiasm

Item	Item	%		
		Yes	No	Unsure
Government funding of unproven cancer medicines	Would you want the government to fund medicines that are not yet known to be safe if there is a chance that they could help those with cancer?	42.44	29.07	28.49
	Would you want the government to fund cancer medicines that have not yet been proven to be effective?	42.44	29.55	28.01

Item	Item	%				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Unsure
Access to unproven cancer medicines	If patients want access to drugs where evidence is unclear, this should only be possible through a clinical trial	2.89	10.59	52.17	22.81	11.55
	If patients want access to drugs where evidence is unclear, they should not have to enter into a clinical trial. Instead, these drugs should be paid for by the government	9.05	37.63	23.68	10.49	19.15



Item	Item	%		
		Yes	No	Unsure
Access to cancer medicines	Do you believe that clinical trials of medicines should be designed to guarantee access to the drug to all research participants?	60.35	18.19	21.46

- **Focus group** and **interview** participants recognized need for faster access and various risks

If you wait for all that process, you've got a whole lot of people dying unnecessarily.

Why do people in America have access to [new drugs], but because we live in Australia we don't?

There's a trade-off between time and cost involved in [drug evaluation], and safety of making sure that we don't do people damage.

The system we've got is good. The community understands that there's a limit to what can be on PBS.

Where do you take the money from, is it okay to take it from education? Not necessarily. They could be the researchers that invent the cure for cancer.

It has to be financially sustainable. There has to be a budget.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- Nuanced and varied consumer perspectives → healthcare professionals need to be aware to provide useful, relevant, individualized advice on cancer medicines made available via accelerated access pathways