PROVIDER INSIGHTS ON MANAGING PATIENTS ON IMMUNOTHERAPY, BARRIERS TO CLINICAL TRIALS, AND BIOMARKER TESTING PREFERENCES

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Background With the advent of immunotherapies for a plethora of solid tumors, the standard of care has dramatically shifted. Approved and investigational options shaping the treatment paradigm for cancer include immune checkpoint inhibitors (ICIs), antibody-drug conjugates, CAR-T cell therapies, and treatments with tumor-infiltrating lymphocytes. As data from numerous clinical trials are reported, new indications are approved, and emerging combinations with checkpoint inhibitors show promise, the immunotherapy landscape continues to morph and evolve.

Methods A 2-part educational series was broadcast live-online in January 2022 and remains on-demand through January 2023 at OMedLive.com. The series was provided in collaboration with the Society for Immunotherapy in Cancer (SITC) and was divided into 2 sessions; the first of which focused on update and emerging approaches in small cell lung cancer and non-small cell lung cancer. The second session highlighted updated in gastroesophageal junction cancer (GEJ) and colorectal cancer (CRC). Knowledge and competence questions were administered pre-, immediate post-, and 2 mos. post-activity. Data from these questions were analyzed to determine engagement and clinical impact.

Results Interim outcomes of the series are reported as of July 2022 from 496 learners; 62% of whom were physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and pharmacists. The series has impacted care for 2,860 patients currently receiving immunotherapy for either lung cancer, GEJ, or CRC. Statistically significant improvements in knowledge and competence were observed across all nine assessment questions. Provider insights were captured related to biomarker practices and challenges/barriers experienced when managing patients on immunotherapy. The most commonly ordered immunotherapy-related biomarker was PD-L1 (50%) with the least commonly ordered being tumor mutational burden (21%). At baseline, only 56% of providers utilized biomarkers to drive treatment planning; however, following engagement in the educational series this % increased to 68%. The greatest challenges for providers managing patients on ICIs were ‘patient ability to afford therapy’ (28%), ‘adherence to treatment schedules’ (18%), and ‘patient understanding of treatment options’ (11%). Barriers to patient enrollment in immunotherapy clinical trials were noted by providers as ‘lack of immunotherapy trials at my institution/in my geographic region’ (35%), ‘patient interest’ (25%), and ‘eligibility requirements’ (14%).

Conclusions The educational series was successful in improving knowledge and competence immediate post-sessions. Provider practice patterns and perceptions of challenges were insightful for further educational opportunities for providers as well as patients.

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