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Women with gynecologic cancer and low income report increased financial stress and anxiety during COVID-19 pandemic

26 APRIL 2021 - A recent study provides insights on the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on employment, anxiety, and financial distress among women with gynecologic cancer and low income. The findings are published early online in *CANCER*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society.

For the study, Stefanie Chen, MD, of Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City, and her colleagues conducted telephone interviews with 100 women with gynecologic cancer living in New York City who were covered by Medicaid health insurance.

Among the major findings:

- 31 percent of patients reported being employed prior to the pandemic, and 21 percent had a change in employment status due to the pandemic.
- 50 percent of patients reported that they felt more financial stress since the start of the pandemic, and 54 percent reported that they worry about future financial problems due to the pandemic.
- 49 percent of patients expressed increased anxiety about cancer since the start of the pandemic, and 83 percent expressed feeling increased anxiety in general.

Having an income less than \$40,000 per year was the most common factor associated with increased financial distress, cancer worry, and anxiety. Early-stage cancer (stage I-II) was also a risk factor for increased financial distress.

“Patients with cancer are already financially vulnerable as many face changes in employment status when they undergo treatment, and also because cancer treatments can become costly as they accrue over time,” said Dr. Chen. “Patients with low income may struggle to prioritize cancer care and treatments over other costs of daily living, especially when they face changes in employment not only due to their cancer diagnosis but also due to the changes in the job market caused by the pandemic.”

Dr. Chen supports increased screening for anxiety and financial stress in these patients. “Understanding the complexity of finances, mental health, and cancer treatments in this population is crucial to the

development of interventions and navigation strategies to ensure timely care and to promote survivorship among patients with all stages of cancer,” she said.

The American Cancer Society announced earlier today in a press release that Suresh S. Ramalingam, MD, will join CANCER as the new Editor-in-Chief beginning on July 1, 2021. Dr. Ramalingam is the deputy director of Winship Cancer Institute at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, and has worked as a Section Editor for CANCER since 2011. Dr. Ramalingam succeeds Fadlo R. Khuri, MD, whose tenure as Editor-in-Chief concludes later this summer.ead

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Study shows tanning bed ban would reduce skin cancer rates in minors and cut healthcare costs

12 APRIL 2021 - A recent study indicates that a U.S. ban on the use of tanning beds among minors would prevent thousands of cases of melanoma in adolescents and would save millions of dollars in healthcare costs. The findings are published early online in CANCER, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society.

Indoor tanning has been linked to an increased risk of melanoma, with the highest risk in those who start using tanning beds at a young age. Unfortunately, the use of tanning beds is a common practice among U.S. adolescents.

Despite the risk of indoor tanning, only a handful of countries have implemented policies to ban tanning beds. Such bans have the potential to save lives and treatment-related costs but come with costs of policy implementation and enforcement, as well as lost revenue to the tanning industry.

To consider both the benefits and costs of a ban, investigators modeled the life course of the U.S. population aged between 14 and 17 years and compared two situations: ban versus no ban.

The team’s simulations revealed that fully adhering to a ban would prevent 15,101 melanoma cases and 3,299 melanoma recurrences among 17.1 million minors, saving \$61 in direct and indirect healthcare