

Crowdfunding pages identify unmet needs among gynecologic cancer patients

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Topic: Financial Toxicity and Disparities

Objectives

To describe the unmet needs disclosed by patients crowdfunding for gynecologic cancer care and to draw comparisons between patients with cervical, uterine, and ovarian cancer.

Methods

Crowdfunding refers to the solicitation of donations, typically using the internet, from a community for a specific cause. We queried the public crowdfunding forum GoFundMe.com for “cervical cancer,” “uterine cancer,” and “ovarian cancer.” The first 50 posts identified on a single day for each disease type for patients fundraising within the US were analyzed. Data on campaign goals and needs expressed were manually extracted. Needs were not mutually exclusive. Significance of continuous variables was determined with Kruskal-Wallis tests.

Results

Disease stage was similar between cancer types, with 60-68% of patients reporting disseminated disease. Most campaigns were fundraising after primary diagnosis (68-76%). States without an implemented Medicaid expansion were over-represented as they accounted for 56% (N=85) of campaigns but only 31.4% of the national population. There were no differences between groups in campaign goal ($p=0.08$) or number of donors ($p=0.08$). Cervical cancer campaigns raised less money than ovarian cancer campaigns based on total amount raised (\$60.3 vs \$85.8, $p=0.01$). Uterine campaigns raised less than ovarian campaigns based on percent of goal (59.7% vs 88.7%, $p<0.01$). Cervical campaigns raised less per donor than uterine (\$50.1 vs \$88.2, $p<0.01$) and ovarian campaigns (\$50.1 vs \$88.3, $p<0.01$). Most expressed need for medical bills (Figure 1, 68-80%) and many expressed needs for living costs (28-48%). Cervical campaigns had the highest frequency of fundraising for lost wages (54%) and to report under-insured status (32%). Ovarian campaigns had the highest frequency of expressing need for transportation assistance (30%) and with lodging for treatment (24%).

Conclusions

Patients crowdfunding to support gynecologic cancer care express a range of unmet needs depending on their cancer type.

Abstract Table or Graph

Figure 1. Needs expressed by patients crowdfunding for gynecologic cancer

