

# 2026 ANNUAL MEETING

**Poster 70:** Navigating Uncertainty: Patient Experiences with Counseling in Recurrent Gynecologic Malignancy

**Presenting Author:** Tali Pomerantz, MD, UC Davis Health

Topic

Quality of Life/Palliative Care

Objectives

Patients with recurrent gynecologic malignancies face complex decisions regarding their treatment and end-of-life (EOL) planning. Although early goals-of-care discussions may improve patient understanding and alignment of care with personal values, the optimal timing and approach to these conversations remain uncertain. This study explores patient experiences discussing prognosis and EOL issues with their oncology providers.

Methods

We conducted a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews with patients diagnosed with recurrent gynecologic malignancies receiving care at an academic institution. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling to capture a range of disease types and treatment experiences. Interview questions were designed to explore patient experiences with prognostic discussions, preferences for timing and format of EOL counseling, perceived barriers to communication, and emotional impact of counseling. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis with Atlas.ti. Two independent investigators coded transcripts and developed a consensus codebook with themes refined through iterative review.

Results

Fourteen patients have been interviewed, with interviews still ongoing. In preliminary review, several key themes have emerged. Patients expressed a strong desire for honest and transparent communication about their prognosis, though preferences varied regarding the level of detail provided. Participants reported that prognostic discussions occurred later than desired, often after multiple lines of therapy. Participants differed in their preferred timing of EOL counseling, with some favoring early introduction while others preferred to defer these conversations until futility of treatment was evident.

Conclusions

Patients with recurrent gynecologic malignancies value honest prognostic communication and individualized approaches to EOL counseling. Preferences for timing and depth of these discussions vary, underscoring the importance of patient-centered communication strategies.