Practice Patterns and Guidelines-Based Treatments: A Renewed Call for Papers on Excellence in Cancer Care in Changing Times

In January 2010, JNCCN—Journal of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network published “a call for papers on excellence in cancer care.” As Editor-in-Chief Harold J. Burstein, MD, PhD, noted at the time, the NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines) published in each issue are “invaluable, evolving, and state-of-the-art documents that articulate the best-known treatment recommendations based on scientific evidence from the clinical literature and the collected wisdom of experts in clinical oncology.” At the same time, he noted further questions in determining quality health care: “How are guidelines interpreted and applied? What trends emerge in clinical practice? To what extent should and do cost considerations affect both treatment recommendations and the treatments received? When choices or trade-offs exist, how should we make them, and how measure their appropriateness?”

Two and a half years later, the publication of the NCCN Guidelines in JNCCN has evolved to include NCCN Guidelines Insights, but these questions remain important. Furthermore, the real-world context of providing care for people with cancer has grown, if anything, even more complex.

As an organization that holds as its mission improving “the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of cancer care so that patients can live better lives,” NCCN recognizes the importance of collaboration and communication in answering those questions and in disseminating this important and relevant information to all stakeholders in cancer care.

For all these reasons, JNCCN is renewing the call for papers on excellence in cancer care. We continue to particularly seek review or original research articles and insightful commentary on the best ways to use oncology resources and improve outcomes for cancer patients. Examples of such contributions might include:

- Studies of practice patterns that reflect (or defy) appropriate guideline-based care, or changes in response to emerging data or treatment recommendations;
- Institutional programs that measure or enhance compliance with guideline-based care, particularly those associated with documented impact on clinical experience or treatment results;
- Investigations of communication and education strategies that enhance treatment compliance and assure high-quality care and patient satisfaction;
- Reports of outcomes for patients with cancer and how guideline-based care, or lack thereof, may alter long-term results;
- Rigorous considerations of cost in treatment decision-making, adherence to proposed therapy, and opportunities for better resource use;
- Comparative effectiveness studies, creating frameworks for understanding trade-offs between treatment side effects, costs, benefits, and outcomes so as to enhance the needed dialogue on optimal care; and
- Insights into the organization of cancer clinics and strategies for improving patient management through efficient use of non-physician health care providers and other resources that can enhance the patient experience.

At the heart of this call for papers remains the conviction that outstanding clinical practices and insights can be shared to create excellence in cancer care for more people. We look forward to publishing these articles in a thoughtful, peer-reviewed process.