From the patient view, what can the healthcare community do to better help people with multiple myeloma get equal care and treatment no matter who they are or where they live?

The full title of this abstract is: A Patient Perspective on Actionable Steps to Address Disparities in Healthcare Among US Patients With Multiple Myeloma

VIEW ABSTRACT

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Date of summary: November 2024

Please note this summary only contains information from the scientific abstract. See a summary of the final poster presentation here.

First Health Equity Summit:
December 2022

Second Health Equity Summit:
September 2023

KEY TAKEAWAY

What are the key takeaways from these meetings?

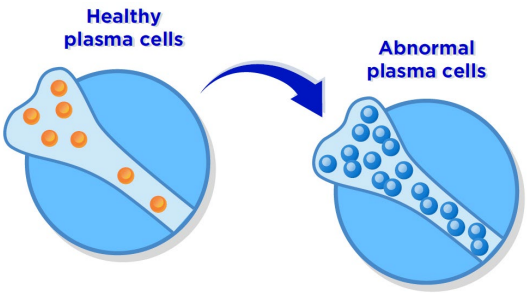
- Two **multiple myeloma** Health Equity Summits (meetings) were held to talk about how people with multiple myeloma may get treated differently depending on who they are and where they live
- The people in the meetings talked about their experiences and identified 3 reasons why some people may not get equal care in the diagnosis and treatment of their multiple myeloma
  - Some people and doctors don't know about multiple myeloma and its symptoms
  - Some people don't understand what their doctor tells them about their treatment choices and don't want to ask questions
  - Some people can't access the best treatment, especially specialist doctors and treatment centers, because of where they live or because they are not told that other doctors or places could help them
- The people at the meetings suggested some things that can be done to make it easier for people to get equal treatment for their multiple myeloma

INTRODUCTION

What is multiple myeloma?

- Multiple myeloma is a blood cancer that affects a type of white blood cell known as a plasma cell in the bone marrow
  - Healthy plasma cells make proteins called antibodies that help fight **infections**

- Multiple myeloma leads to the buildup of abnormal **plasma cells** in the **bone marrow**, which can:
  - Stop the body from making normal numbers of healthy blood cells, often causing anemia (low red blood cells)
  - Make abnormal **antibodies** (also called M proteins)
  - Interfere with the normal function of kidneys and affect bone health



- At this time, multiple myeloma is not considered curable, but current treatments can often put the disease into remission for years

Does multiple myeloma affect some people more than others?

- Black people are more likely to have multiple myeloma than White people in the US
- Black people also have lower recovery rates than other people
  - It is harder to get treatment because they are often poorer, don't have enough insurance, and often live far away from specialists
  - They also may not trust the medical system because of their past experiences

What does this summary describe?

- This summary describes 2 meetings where people affected by multiple myeloma talked about their experiences and how people may get treated differently, depending on who they are and where they live
- The people at the meeting came up with potential solutions to help treatment become more equal

Researchers wanted to find out…

- How do people affected by multiple myeloma feel about their treatment experience?
- Are there any solutions that will help make access to diagnosis and treatment more equal?

Who took part in these meetings?

- Various people were invited to the meetings
  - People who have multiple myeloma
  - Doctors and nurses who treat people with multiple myeloma
  - Patient advocates who support people with multiple myeloma and help them with their doctors and insurance. They can explain what the doctor has said, what test results mean, or what the medical bills are for

What happened at the first meeting?

- People talked about their experiences in getting diagnosed and being treated for multiple myeloma
- A number of issues were talked about, and 2 topics were selected for further discussion based on what was most important to the people at the first meeting

The 2 topics selected for the second meeting were:

How can people's awareness and understanding of multiple myeloma be improved?

How can people get the best treatment possible?

What happened at the second meeting?

- People at the second meeting talked about the 2 topics in more detail
- Then they talked about potential solutions to the problems that make it difficult for all people to get equal access to care for their multiple myeloma

How can people's awareness and understanding of multiple myeloma be improved?

People (including some doctors) and insurers are not aware of multiple myeloma and what symptoms to look for. This means that it takes longer for people to be diagnosed

- Give doctors training and extra resources to learn about multiple myeloma
- Make sure that insurers know about required diagnostic tests so that they pay for them
- Have support groups & community health workers to teach people about multiple myeloma

People sometimes do not understand what multiple myeloma is, and they may not feel comfortable or may not know what to ask about their diagnosis or possible treatments

- Training doctors to be aware of other people's cultures can reduce bias and make it easier for people to ask questions
- Support groups and community health workers can help people not to be afraid to ask for information from their doctors
- Offering diagnosis and treatment information in a person's native language and in smaller pieces can help people understand it better

How can people get the best treatment possible?

There aren't enough specialist doctors (especially Black doctors) for people with multiple myeloma

Where people live, who they are, how much money they have, and their insurance makes a difference to getting to see a specialist doctor

- If someone lives in a remote area, telehealth (like video calling) can make it easier to talk to a specialist doctor
- Cultural training can help general doctors be less biased in referring Black people to specialist doctors
- Patient navigators can help people get insurance that will pay for specialist doctor visits
- Training more Black doctors to become specialist doctors can help build trust between people and their doctors
- Promoting racial concordance (matching doctor and patient cultures) can help people better understand clinical trials and lessen their negative feelings toward them

CONCLUSIONS

What were the main conclusions of these meetings?

- The Health Equity Summits (meetings) allowed people with multiple myeloma and patient advocates to talk about their experiences and barriers when trying to access fair treatment
  - A person's access to treatment for multiple myeloma is affected by their race, how much money that have, and how they feel about the healthcare system
- Steps were suggested to improve treatment of disadvantaged people, focusing on expanding awareness, understanding, and access to care

MORE INFORMATION

Who sponsored the study?

These meetings were sponsored by Pfizer Inc.

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New York, NY 10001
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The sponsor thanks everyone who took part in the meetings.

Where can I find more information?

For more information on this study, please visit:

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PHONETICS

Find out how to say medical terms used in this summary

Antibody
<AN-tee_BAH-dee>

Myeloma
<MY-eh-LOH-muh>

antibody: a protein the body's immune system makes to help fight infections
bias: an unfair judgement about something by either feeling positively or negatively toward it, without a good reason
bone marrow: the soft, spongy tissue that is in most bones. This is where blood cells develop before moving into the bloodstream
immune system: the body's defense system. It helps fight infections and cancer
infection: invasion, growth, and spread of germs in the body that can cause fever and other health problems
multiple myeloma: a type of blood cancer that begins in the plasma cells
plasma cell: a type of white blood cell that makes large amounts of antibodies