



University of Michigan
Health System

Department of
Public Relations &
Marketing
Communications

2901 Hubbard St
Suite 2400
Ann Arbor, MI
48109-2435

(734) 764-2220
(734) 615-2169 fax

www.med.umich.edu

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE
8:30 a.m. Central
Saturday, April 14, 2012

CONTACT:
Nicole Fawcett
University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center
nfawcett@umich.edu, 734-764-2220

Kristen Lidke Woodward
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center
kwoodwar@fhcrc.org, 206-667-5095

Decision guide reduced uncertainty over breast cancer prevention, study finds

Tailored, web-based intervention helped women understand options

New Orleans, LA - When women at high risk of breast cancer viewed a customized web-based decision guide about prevention options, they were more likely to make a choice about prevention and to feel comfortable with their choice, a new study finds.

Researchers developed a web-based tool called the Guide to Decide, which included general information about breast cancer and personalized information about an individual woman's five-year risk of breast cancer. The guide walked women through two medical options to prevent breast cancer: tamoxifen and raloxifene. Information was tailored to each woman's age and race, and included information on the benefits and risk of tamoxifen and raloxifene as well as how it would affect the woman's breast cancer risk.

The study looked at post-menopausal women ages 40-74 who were considered at high risk of breast cancer. Of the 1,012 women who participated, 690 were randomly assigned to view the decision guide. Participants were asked after viewing the guide and again three months later about whether they wanted to receive preventive treatment and how they felt about that decision.

Women who viewed the Guide to Decide reported significantly less uncertainty when deciding whether to take tamoxifen or raloxifene, and three months later they were more likely to have made a decision.

"Since the decision to use tamoxifen or raloxifene to prevent breast cancer is based on each woman's preferences, with no single right or wrong answer, the intervention enabled each woman to weigh the relative risks and benefits for herself and make a decision that aligned with her own values and preferences," says study first author Matthew (Mateo) P. Banegas, M.P.H., M.S., a doctoral candidate at the University of Washington and Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. Banegas will present the findings April 14 at the Society of Behavioral Medicine annual meeting in New Orleans, La.

"Because the guide was web-based, women could access it in the comfort of their home or preferred setting, at their own pace, and with their family, friends or other support system around. In addition, tailoring the information meant it matched each woman's circumstances and was much more personal," says study senior author Angela Fagerlin,

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Ph.D., associate professor of internal medicine and co-director of the Center for Bioethics and Social Sciences in Medicine at the University of Michigan Medical School, and a research scientist at the VA Ann Arbor Center for Clinical Management Research.

Future research will look at how many risks and benefits can be presented to patients before they are overwhelmed by information and are not able to process it fully.

Breast cancer statistics: 229,060 Americans will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year and 39,920 will die from the disease, according to the American Cancer Society.

Additional authors: Jennifer B. McClure and Sarah Greene, Group Health Research Institute; William E. Barlow, Cancer Research and Biostatistics and Group Health Research Institute; Peter A. Ubel, Duke University; Dylan M. Smith, Stony Brook University; Brian Zikmund-Fisher, University of Michigan; Sharon H. Alford, Henry Ford Health System

Funding: National Institutes of Health (P50 CA101451), National Cancer Institute Biobehavioral Cancer Prevention and Control Training Program (R25CA092408) at the University of Washington, and the National Cancer Institute Center for Hispanic Health Promotion Training Program (1U54CA153502-01) at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center

Disclosure: None

Reference: Society for Behavioral Medicine 33rd Annual Meeting and Scientific Sessions, April 11-14, 2012. "Assessing a web-based, tailored decision aid for women at high risk of breast cancer"

Resources:

U-M Cancer AnswerLine, 800-865-1125

U-M Comprehensive Cancer Center, www.mcancer.org

Clinical trials at U-M, www.UMClinicalStudies.org/cancer

[Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, www.fhcrc.org](http://FredHutchinsonCancerResearchCenter.org)

The Society of Behavioral Medicine is a multidisciplinary organization of clinicians, educators, and scientists dedicated to promoting the study of the interactions of behavior with biology and the environment and the application of that knowledge to improve the health and well being of individuals, families, communities, and populations. www.sbm.org

This study was presented during the 2012 Annual Meeting and Scientific Session of the Society of Behavioral Medicine (SBM) from April 11-14 in New Orleans, LA. However, it does not reflect the policies or the opinion of the SBM.

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