

# Discussions of Life Expectancy Estimates & Illness Understanding

An examination on the influence physician-patient prognostic discussions have on the accuracy of patient illness understanding & patient capacity to make informed decisions

## The Study

An NCI sponsored study which examined 178 patients with advanced cancer whom oncologists expected to expire within 6 months. Patients were interviewed before (Pre-scan) and after (Post-Scan) a visit in which cancer restaging scan results were discussed.

N=178

Pre-Scan

5%

## The Results

Had **COMPLETE** illness understanding, before the restaging scan visit.

38%

**NEVER** reported that they had discussions of prognosis/ life expectancy with their oncologist.

10%

**ONLY** reported that they had discussions of prognosis/ life expectancy with their oncologist.

Post-Scan

44%

Reported increase in complete patient illness understanding after restaging scan visit

28%

Of patients reported +1 or +2 improved illness understanding after restaging scan visit.

INSIGHT:

Patients with advanced cancer who report recent discussions of prognosis/life expectancy with their oncologists come to have a better understanding of the terminal nature of their illnesses.

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**Weill Cornell Medicine**  
Center for Research on End-of-Life Care

By The Numbers

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Source:

Epstein AS, Prigerson HG, O'Reilly EM, Maciejewski PK: Discussions of Life Expectancy and Changes in Illness Understanding in Patients with Advanced Cancer. J Clin Oncol. 2016 Jul 10; 34(20): 2398-403. DOI: 10.1200/JCO.2015.63.6696. Epub 2016 May 23

By:

