

U.S. cancer doctors to debate care costs

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The American Society of Clinical Oncology's agenda at its Atlanta meeting includes a first time debate on cost-benefit analysis of cancer treatment.

This will be the first time the issue is coming to the fore in the United States where drugs often are allocated based on negotiations between healthcare providers, doctors and insurers, The Financial Times reported.

"In the not-too-distant future, our society will probably be looking more closely at the gains and costs for cancer treatments in the same ways that other therapies have been," Dr. Neal Meropol, the panel's chairman, told the newspaper.

The meeting traditionally has showcased developments in treatment and for marketing new drugs, while the costs of the drugs are not mentioned.

"ASCO needs to take a leadership role in helping to figure out how we can use resources to reward innovation so as to improve cancer treatments, while delivering high-quality care to all patients with cancer. But there is an antagonism between the two," said Meropol.

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