

# Cancer recurrence fears 'overlooked'

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(PhysOrg.com) -- The anxiety of cancer returning is often overlooked by both patients and medics, according to leading experts in the disease.

Health experts from around the world will gather in Scotland this week to examine cancer patients - fears of recurrence following treatment, and outline new methods to contain unrealistic fears.

Organised by cancer specialists at the University of St Andrews, the international group will come together to improve supplementary psychological care during the recovery process.

The experts hope to gain new understanding into the ways in which patients attempt to cope with the possibility of a recurrence and the psychological effects of this uncertainty.

Organiser Gerry Humphris, Professor of Health Psychology at the University of St Andrews, said, "The psychological after-effects of a cancer diagnosis and the burden of life saving medical treatments has received close attention by social scientists and medical teams alike; however the anxiety of the cancer returning is one that is often overlooked in the clinics as both patients and clinicians concentrate on irradiating the disease."

The theme of the colloquium, which will bring together leading researchers from Europe, America, Australia and New Zealand, is 'Fear of Recurrence'.

Professor Humphris continued, "Recently, international experts have agreed that the study of this neglected psychological construct is paramount to understanding patients' longer term recovery and mental well being.

"The study of fears of recurrence is long overdue as many patients have volunteered their concerns over the years. It is hoped that this colloquium will enable a strong focus to be applied to defining, assessing, describing associated clinical phenomena and outlining new methods to contain unrealistic fears."

Provided by University of St Andrews

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