

Advocates and researchers educate community about cancer in game show format

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Using a combination of "Jeopardy," "Saturday Night Live" and a famous Discovery Channel show called MythBusters, patient advocates and researchers at Vanderbilt Ingram Cancer Center presented "Mythbusters: Cancer Research in Jeopardy" to their community in an effort to increase awareness of cancer research, particularly clinical trials.

"Educational programs that are unique, entertaining and interactive can have a positive effect," said Jane Kennedy, M.S.S.W., manager of patient advocacy at the Vanderbilt Ingram Cancer Center. "This project was an opportunity for advocates and researchers to work together and provide community education in a new and entertaining way before an actual cancer diagnosis."

Less than 5 percent of eligible adults participate in cancer clinical trials, which hampers research efforts, according to Kennedy. At the American Association for [Cancer Research](#) 101st Annual Meeting 2010, held here April 17- 21, Kennedy presented her experience with educating the community via this new interactive learning tool.

Kennedy and colleagues invited 50 community members to the event; 46 attended. In a format she described as similar to the "Jeopardy" game show, the group of cancer survivors and postdoctoral fellows responded to 10 common myths about cancer research.

"Similar to 'Saturday Night Live,' our 'faux celebrities' provided humorous responses to the myths presented," said Kennedy.

Myths included information such as: clinical trials are risky and not safe; you can't drop out of a clinical trial once you enroll; and cancer clinical trials are a "last resort," etc. Participants responded electronically.

Once the responses were tabulated and presented to the participants, top researchers and experts from Vanderbilt appeared via video to discuss the truth of the myth in question.

Survey results taken after the game showed that the participants' knowledge increased by 20 percent, which Kennedy said was significant in an audience where 70 percent had college degrees. Nearly all (96 percent) said the game was an effective method for learning and 87 percent said they would discuss [clinical trials](#) with their family.

According to Kennedy, the advocates, researchers and professionals who participated in "Mythbusters: [Cancer](#) Research in Jeopardy" were universally positive about the idea and the experience. The research group had plans to replicate the game show in a less educated population than the study group.

Provided by American Association for Cancer Research

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