

Best poster at ESMO 2017 shows positive trials twice as likely to be reported in lay press

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Randomised controlled trials with positive results are twice as likely to be reported by the lay press as those with negative trials, according to results from the Best Poster in Public Health and Health Economics at the ESMO 2017 Congress in Madrid. Trials on immunotherapy and targeted therapy were more commonly reported than those on chemotherapy.

The Best Poster in Public Health and Health Economics was chosen by judge Dr José M. Martín-Moreno, Professor of Medicine and Public Health, University of Valencia, Spain, out of 47 posters on the topic presented at ESMO 2017.

Conducted by researchers in Canada, Israel, Spain, Switzerland, and Slovenia, the study explored the role of the lay media in disseminating the results of randomised controlled trials in common cancers. It also looked at factors that determined whether a trial was reported in the lay press before it was presented at a scientific conference or published in a scientific journal (referred to as 'early reporting' by the researchers).

The analysis included 180 phase III randomised controlled trials in breast, colorectal, lung and [prostate cancer](#) that were completed between January 2005 and October 2016. More than half (52%) of trials were reported in the lay media and more than one-quarter (27%) were reported before a scientific presentation or publication.

The researchers found that early reporting of trial results by the lay press was twice as likely if the trial was positive compared to negative, nearly five times as likely if the trial was about targeted therapy compared to chemotherapy, nearly eight times as likely if the trial concerned immunotherapy instead of chemotherapy, and three times as likely if the trial was in prostate rather than breast [cancer](#).

Lead author Dr Domen Ribnikar, a clinical research fellow at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre in Toronto, Canada, said: "We found that the lay press are more likely to write stories about cancer before a scientific presentation or publication if they have positive results, are about immunotherapy or targeted therapy, or cover prostate cancer. It seems likely that readers of lay media are not getting an accurate view of oncology drug development."

Martin-Moreno said: "The lay press is a key source of information about cancer for patients and the public which makes this an important topic. This poster puts its finger on an important problem; it would be preferable if the media did report [trials](#) that have been previously peer reviewed by journals or by scientific committees at meetings."

"The authors were a young group of researchers from different countries who have shed some light on an interesting subject that has not been extensively studied," he added.

More information: Abstract 1447P 'Reporting of results of randomized trials in common cancers in the lay media' was presented by Domen Ribnikar during a Poster Display session on CNS Tumours on Sunday, 10 September, 13:15 to 14:15 (CEST) in Hall 8.

Provided by European Society for Medical Oncology

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