

Title: Exploration of Patient Retention in Seeking a Second Opinion; a Retrospective Cohort Study

Abstract:

Introduction:

It is common for cancer patients to seek a second opinion for a variety of reasons. Understanding what drives patients to choose to receive treatment with their second opinion provider may uncover opportunities to improve the second opinion process. Therefore, we sought to identify the patient, disease, and treatment characteristics that were associated with second opinion retention rates in patients seeking a second surgical opinion for breast, colon, and pancreatic cancer.

Methods:

We conducted a retrospective cohort study to evaluate patients who sought a second opinion within a large, academic healthcare system for breast, colon, and pancreatic cancer. Electronic medical records were reviewed for second opinions. Patient demographics and characteristics were collected and compared between the retained group and the non-retained groups.

Results:

A total of 237 patients obtained second opinions for breast, colorectal, and pancreatic cancer. Patients that were offered a different treatment plan at their second opinion were more likely to be retained for systemic therapy ($P=0.009$) for

pancreatic cancer and any treatment for colon cancer ($P=0.003$). Seeing a radiation oncologist ($P=0.007$) or a plastic surgeon ($P=0.02$) during the multidisciplinary consultation increased retention rates for breast cancer.

Conclusion:

Surgeons can better identify patients that are more likely to be retained after a second opinion by the individual patient characteristics and treatment factors. Understanding the factors that lead to retention for these three cancer types may help physicians provide the best possible resources for most patients presenting for second opinion evaluations.