The presence of lung cancer stigma is well documented in the scientific literature (Chapple et al, 2004; Chambers et al, 2012; Marlow et al, 2015) and has been shown to impact the care and treatment of lung cancer survivors (Tod et al. 2008; Carter-Harris et al 2014).

In 2008, a large survey of over 200 patients, 200 oncologists, and 1000 members of the general population revealed that most respondents believed lung cancer was principally caused by external factors, was preventable, and that lung cancer patients were at least partly to blame for their illness (Weiss et al. 2014; Weiss et al. 2017).

We sought to understand whether perceptions in the three distinct groups have changed over the last decade with the advent of screening, increased advocacy and a changing treatment paradigm. These are the results of the patient survey.

Patients were asked to respond to the following statements and asked to respond according to a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from agree completely to disagree completely.

For most statements, more patients felt stigmatized or blamed for their lung cancer compared to a decade ago, p values in red indicate statistically significant changes.

Patients who felt society treats lung cancer patients differently, 89% indicated the immediate association with smoking as one of the reasons.

In 2018, significantly more patients answered yes to:

- Do you feel that people with lung cancer are viewed or treated differently than people with other types of cancer by our society in general?
- Do you feel that you, personally, have been viewed or treated differently by our society in general?

Over half (51%) indicated strangers have said or done things that blame them for their cancer, up significantly from 31% in 2008.

One in four believed loved ones would be more supportive if they had a different type of cancer, up significantly from the 11% who felt this way in 2008.

Nearly one third said that family/friends have said or done things that blame them for their lung cancer, up from 2008 although not significantly.

After a decade of research progress in lung cancer, these data show that lung cancer stigma has increased amongst patients and they seem to feel it more acutely. This may be due to increased awareness of stigma and empowerment around the disease.

Additional analyses, including correlating responses to the validated Cataldo Lung Cancer Stigma Scale, are ongoing.

"There is a unique opportunity to be proactive rather than reactive in this arena. Successfully addressing stigma is an important step in fulfilling the promise to reduce the burden of lung cancer."

- Hamann, Ver Hoeve, Carter-Harris, Studts, and Ostroff (J Thorac Oncol. 2018 Aug;13(8):1062-1075.)

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