



2022 Targeted Therapies Patient Forum

Biomarker Testing for NSCLC: The Importance and the Disparities

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TRANSCRIPT

I would also like to mention that some years ago, I was in the fortunate position of being on the steering committee for the National Cancer Institute. Here, in conjunction with the FDA and academic organizations, we launched what we call the “Master Protocol” for lung cancer, or the “Lung-MAP” concept, which uses clinical studies based on molecular profiling. To date, we've screened more than 4000 patients and assigned over 2700 patients to clinical trials. This approach is proving fruitful and hopefully accelerating scientific progress.

But how are we doing with molecular testing for patients with lung cancer? I had assumed we were doing pretty well. However, I was enlightened at the ASCO meeting last year when real-world biomarker testing studies were presented. Believe it or not, for patients with lung cancer, thousands of whom were involved in this study, less than 50% had more than five biomarkers studied. That was a wake-up call. This was a community-based study, and sadly, there is a significant ethnic discrepancy, with African Americans faring particularly poorly in terms of having their tumors tested.

So, the bottom line here is we have a lot of work to do. We need to ensure that most patients with lung cancer get tested, and we need to ramp up education within communities. There are identifiable barriers, such as patient-related issues, the size and location of the tumor, organizational hurdles, clinician barriers, structural barriers, and policy barriers. We must address each of these to ensure that our patients get the opportunity to undergo testing, hopefully with next-generation sequencing. And with that, I will end my talk.