

# PATIENT ALIGNED CARE THROUGHOUT TREATMENT (PACTT) LAB

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**Sarah Tevis, MD, FACS**  
PACTT Lab Director

Dr. Tevis is a Society of Surgical Oncology fellowship-trained breast surgical oncologist and board-certified general surgeon with a passion for patient centered care and quality improvement.

## Welcome!

Welcome to the first edition of the Patient Aligned Care Throughout Treatment (PACTT) Lab Newsletter! We are thrilled to introduce you to the latest developments in our research.

Within this newsletter, you will find updates on ongoing projects. Additionally, we'll share insights into currently recruiting studies, offering you the opportunity to participate in shaping the future of patient-centered care.

We would like to express our gratitude to all of our funders and research participants. Your generous support in funding our research and active participation in it have been invaluable contributions to our work.

Thank you for your commitment to our research!

## Contact & Webpage

breastsurgerystudy@cuanschutz.edu  
<https://pacttlab.wordpress.com>



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## Patient Retention and Second Opinions

by

Alec McCranie, BA

A second opinion is an important tool that patients can use to seek additional information and reassurance on their condition. This option is especially important for patients with serious diagnoses such as cancer. More than 40% of patients seek a second opinion because they are dissatisfied with the communication from their initial provider. Upwards of 32% of patients have a change in their treatment plan resulting from their second opinion. However, almost 80% of patients return to their original providers for treatment. Despite various studies on why patients choose to seek a second opinion, there is little information on what contributes to where patients choose to receive care. This study looked at what factors influence where patients with breast cancer, colon cancer, and pancreatic cancer ultimately receive their care.

Our results suggest that there are different factors that influence patients' decisions for each cancer type. For patients with breast cancer, having a consultation with a radiation oncologist and a plastic surgeon involved on the care team lead to patients more likely to receive care with that team. Patients that identified as non-Hispanic were also more likely to stay with their second opinion. Improving Spanish translation services and providing bilingual handouts can enhance access to care for patients that identify as Hispanic. Patients with colon cancer were more likely to receive care at their second opinion if they were offered a different treatment compared to their initial opinion. Patients with pancreatic cancer, were more likely to receive care at their second opinion if they did not have metastatic (widespread) disease. These findings highlight that understanding the unique factors associated with each cancer type can help physicians provide tailored resources and improve patient care.

McCranie A., Quinn C., Lee A., Leonard L., Vemuru S., Huynh V., Ahrendt G., Kaoutzanis C., Fisher C., Romandetti K., Gleisner A., Chapman B., Meguid C., Schulick R., Del Chiaro, M., Tevis S. Exploration of patient retention in seeking a second opinion: A retrospective cohort study. *Journal of Surgical Research*. Accepted for publication.



## Information Transparency: New Rules

by

Elizabeth A. O'Brien , BA

After April 2021, due to new legislation (the 21st Century Cures Act) all electronic health information must be immediately released to patients. This is a change from the previous regulations allowing a delay on laboratory test results, radiology, or pathology. We were interested in how this legislation was impacting both patients and their healthcare providers.

Through interviews with patients and clinicians, we were able to explore in depth how people were reacting to this change and potential strategies to support patients when receiving their results. We found that patients appreciate the additional, direct information, but can sometimes be distressed or confused after reading the reports. Interviews highlighted the impersonal nature of electronic release and the need for face-to-face interactions, as well as the development of new resources to support patients.

Thank you to all who participated in our surveys and interviews!

O'Brien E, Vemuru S, Leonard L, Himelhoch B, Adams M, Taft N, Kaiswal K, Sams S, Cumbler E, Wolverton D, Ahrendt G, Yi J, Lin C, Miles R, Hampanda K, Tevis S. Information transparency with immediate release: Oncology clinician and patient perceptions. *American Journal of Surgery*. 2024;227:165-174. doi:10.1016/j.amjsurg.2023.10.015



## Breast Cancer Patients' Concerns Shift Through Treatment

by

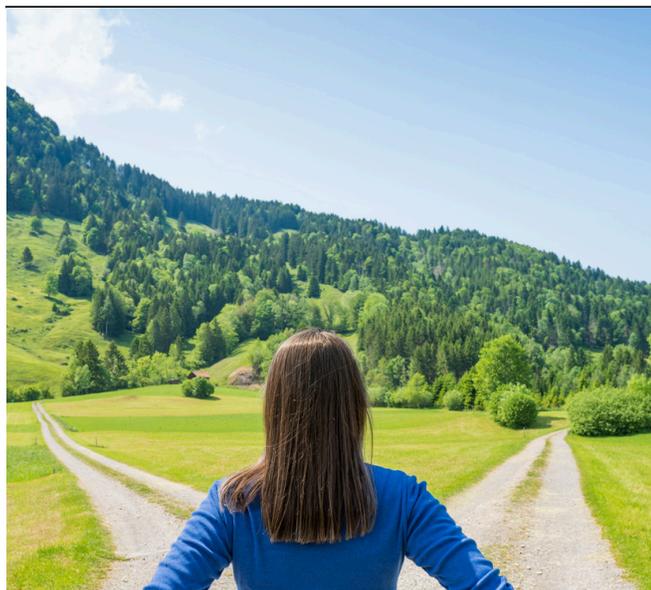
Jasmine Jeon, MS

As breast cancer treatment outcomes improve, it's important to address the side effects and emotional distress that patients experience to enhance their quality of life. While the distress associated with breast cancer is well documented, less is known about how these concerns evolve throughout the different stages of treatment. This study explored the progression of worries among women with non-metastatic breast cancer, following them from diagnosis to other phases of their treatment journey to better understand their changing concerns.

The study involved 262 patients with newly diagnosed Stage I-III breast cancer who were surveyed about their top 3 concerns before surgery and at several points up to a year afterward. Findings revealed that patients' worries shifted depending on the stage of treatment. Before surgery, patients were primarily concerned with the treatment timeline. After surgery, their worries shifted to issues like physical appearance and the side effects of surgery. Throughout the treatment phases, consistent concerns included fear of cancer diagnosis, recurrence, and metastasis. These findings suggest that support and interventions should be tailored to address the specific concerns at each treatment phase to improve patients' overall well-being.

Jeon J, Adams M, Higgins M, Vemuru S, Ludwigson A, Parris H, Huynh V, Baurle E, Coons H, Rojas K, Matlock D, Lee C, Kim S, Cumbler E, Tevis S. Breast cancer surgery: A qualitative exploration of concerns over time. *Journal of Surgical Research*. Accepted for publication.

# CURRENTLY RECRUITING!



## Breast Surgery Decision Aid

This study focuses on evaluating a patient decision aid (DA) designed for early-stage breast cancer patients making a decision between lumpectomy and mastectomy.

It aims to assess the content, development process, and effectiveness of the DA, while also gathering feedback from patients and healthcare professionals to refine its layout and ensure its suitability.

## Sexual Health Video Pilot

This study aims to address the sexual health needs of women diagnosed with breast cancer, spanning from initial diagnosis to survivorship.

Additionally, the study intends to test a video-based educational intervention tailored to breast cancer patients and seeks to identify gaps in sexual health education during diagnosis and treatment, determine optimal timing for delivering such education, and longitudinally characterize patients' sexual well-being throughout their journey.



## Immediate Release of Information

Online access to medical records through patient portals has increased in the last decade. While this transition provides benefits such as increasing patient autonomy, it also presents challenges as patients now receive complex pathology reports without any simplification or interpretation from their healthcare provider.

This study aims to evaluate the use of the Chrome extension (MedEd) by patients interpreting medical records independently and to evaluate their comprehension of medical information while using the resource.

**INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN A STUDY?  
CONTACT [BREASTSURGERYSTUDY@CUANSCHUTZ.EDU](mailto:BREASTSURGERYSTUDY@CUANSCHUTZ.EDU)**

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## CELEBRATIONS IN THE LAB!

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**Sarah Tevis, MD, FACS**

Dr. Sarah Tevis was awarded a five-year grant from the American Cancer Society to review psychosocial outcomes of Breast Cancer patients one-year after they receive surgery.



**Monica Adams, PhD**

Dr. Monica Adams successfully defended her dissertation and was awarded the Health and Behavioral Sciences 2023-2024 Outstanding Doctoral Research Award.



**Madeline Higgins, MD**

Dr. Madeline Higgins was awarded the 2023 International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health (ISSWSH) Scholars in Women's Health Research Grant for her study, "Addressing Sexual Concerns for Breast Cancer Patients: A Pilot Study of a Novel Video-based Intervention."



**Alexandra Verosky, MD**

Dr. Alexandra Verosky matched at the Sky Ridge General Surgery Residency Program in Lone Tree, CO.

*Congratulations*

# LAB SNAPSHOTS

