



An Immuno-Oncology Census: Assessment of Clinician Knowledge and Educational Needs in 2020

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BACKGROUND

The landscape for clinician education in immuno-oncology (IO) has changed dramatically since the first approval of an immune checkpoint inhibitor (ICI) in 2011. Educational initiatives have had to evolve with the multitude of new IO approvals and indications, as well as continuous integration of these therapies in patient care. As such, an IO census survey was administered and analyzed to better assess the current knowledge and educational needs of the oncology care delivery team.

METHODS

In June-September 2020, the Association of Community Cancer Centers administered an online survey to evaluate real-world challenges in the delivery of IO therapies and assess the education and resource needs among its multidisciplinary membership. The survey included questions related to demographics, current IO practices, and top priorities and challenges in IO. A total of 39 complete responses were received, representing a range of clinical disciplines and practice settings, and then analyzed to identify key themes.

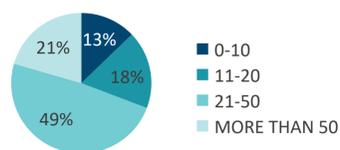
DEMOGRAPHICS

The majority of respondents included: advanced practice nurses (21%), nurse managers (18%), medical oncologists (15%), and pharmacists (13%).

Seventy percent of respondents represented community oncology practices and 30% represented academic practices. In addition, 56% of respondents were located in an urban area, and 35% were located in suburban or rural areas.

Moreover, most respondents indicated that their practice managed 21-50 patients being treated with immunotherapies per week, on average.

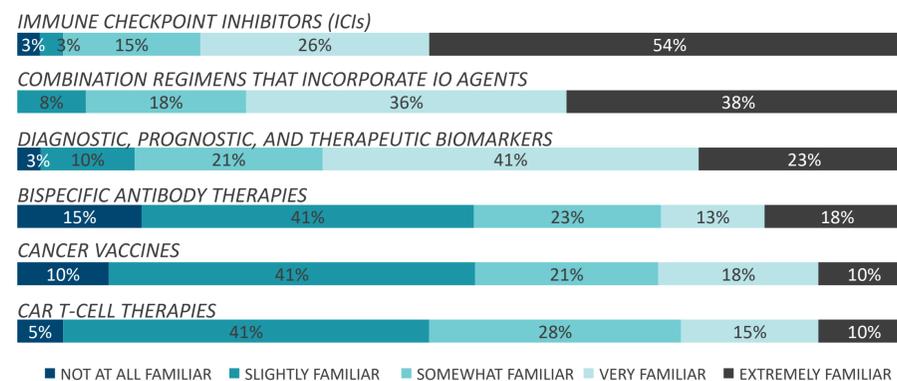
PATIENTS MANAGED WITH IMMUNOTHERAPIES IN A WEEK



RESULTS

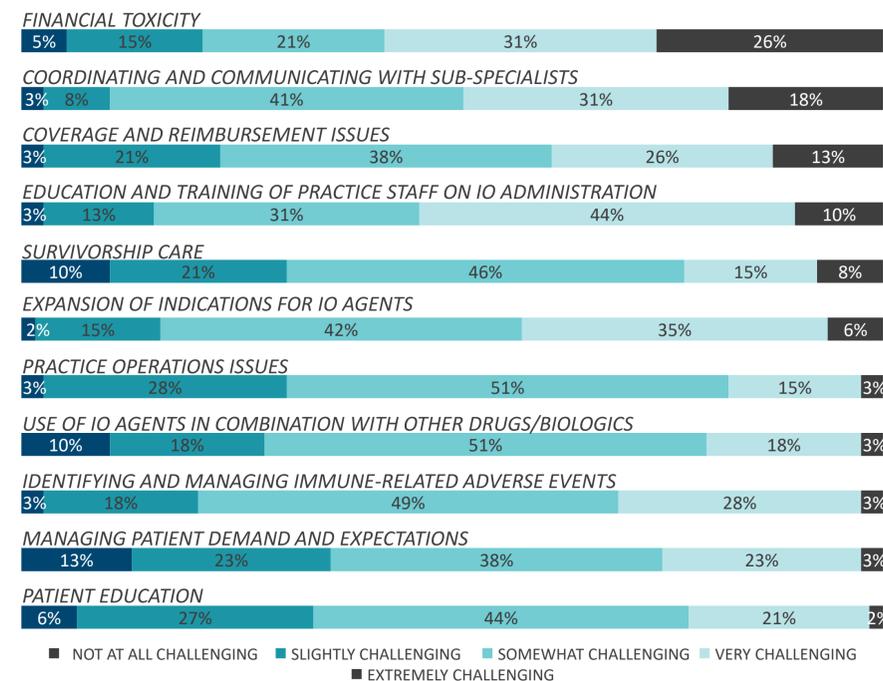
When asked about familiarity with different therapeutic topics, respondents were most familiar with ICIs. There was generally less familiarity with more emerging IO agents, such as bispecific antibody therapies, cancer vaccines, and chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapies.

FAMILIARITY WITH IO THERAPEUTIC TOPICS



The top IO-related challenges were financial toxicity and coordinating and communicating with sub-specialists. Whereas, managing patient demand, patient education, survivorship care, and operations issues were reported as less challenging.

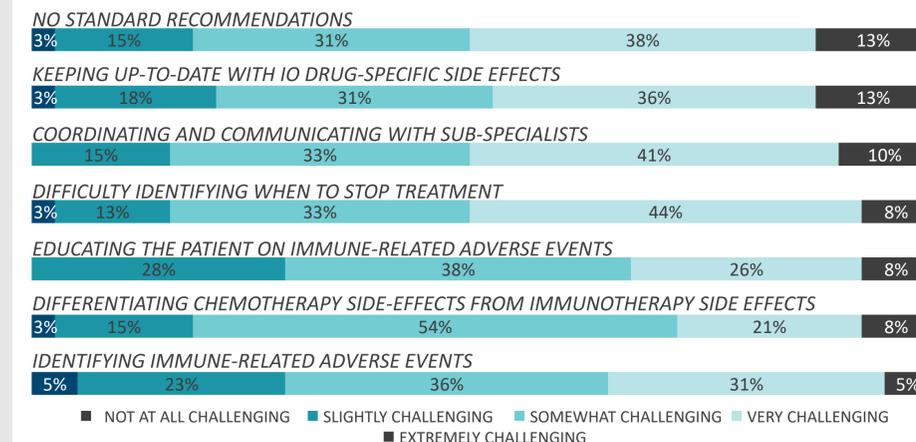
IO-RELATED CHALLENGES



RESULTS CONTINUED

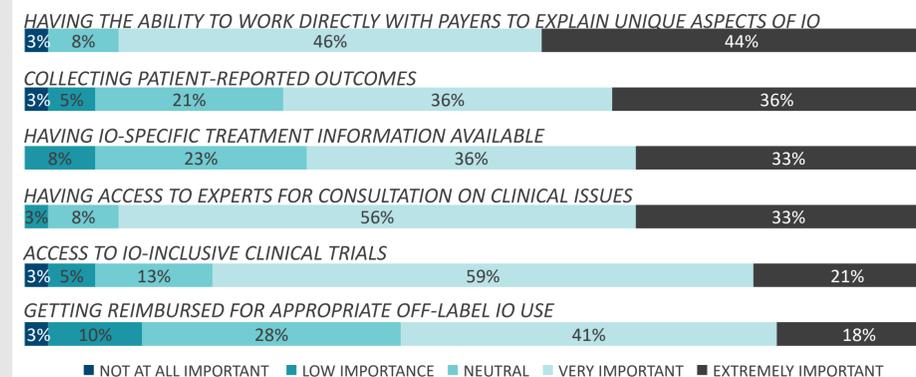
When asked about IO survivorship care planning, the greatest percent of respondents said identifying when to stop treatment was very or extremely challenging.

CHALLENGES RELATED TO SURVIVORSHIP CARE PLANNING IN IO



When asked about the importance of different aspects of using IO agents in practice, most respondents rated these topics as very important or extremely important. However, lower importance was observed related to having IO-specific treatment information available and getting reimbursed for appropriate off-label IO use.

IO-RELATED PRIORITIES



When further analyzing this data based on clinical discipline, we found:

- 71% of nurse managers find having the ability to work directly with payers to explain unique aspects of IO very important.
- 67% of medical oncologists find having IO-specific treatment information available extremely important.
- 40% of pharmacists feel having access to experts for consultation on clinical issues is extremely important.

RESULTS – COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Respondents were asked to rank various challenges related to IO use during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 43% of respondents found maintaining day-to-day operations for IO clinical trials extremely challenging (10%) or very challenging (33%).
- 40% of respondents found using telehealth or technology to triage or manage immune-related adverse events extremely challenging (7%) or very challenging (33%).
- Only 13% of respondents found decision-making around patient clinic visits and adjusting treatment regimens slightly challenging (10%) or not at all challenging (3%).

CONCLUSIONS

Our results indicate that clinicians are very familiar with the use of established IO agents, but are in need of additional education related to emerging therapies. In addition, there are clear trends that clinicians desire more clinical and operational support on use of IO agents and associated testing, easing patients' and programs' associated financial strain, and coordinating care across sub-specialties. We also observed specific challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic that will most likely extend beyond the time of this analysis. Overall, additional education is needed to address these knowledge gaps, practice priorities, and barriers as immuno-oncology continues to evolve and learnings must be translated into community programs and practices.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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For more information about the ACCC Immuno-Oncology Institute, please visit acc-cancer.org/immunotherapy