



Health Bulletin



Easing The Side Effects Of Cancer Treatments

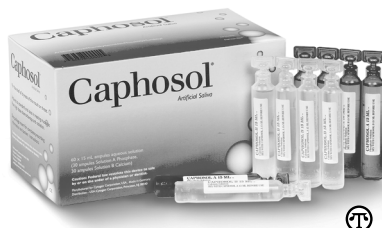
(NAPSA)—Americans have become increasingly aware of the numerous treatment options available to cancer patients. Yet many do not know about the side effects some treatments can have.

For instance, a condition called oral mucositis (OM) is one of the most debilitating and common complications of cancer treatment. Yet a recent survey found that 97 percent of OM sufferers believe there is little or no awareness among the general public of the condition.

The low level of public awareness may be explained by a perceived lack of effective treatments and information about OM—a problem cited by 85 percent of the survey respondents.

“Oral mucositis is one of the most common, debilitating and painful side effects of cancer therapy, and the compelling results of this survey underscore the significant unmet medical needs among cancer patients, caregivers and physicians,” said Michael D. Becker, president and CEO of Cytoner Corporation.

Becker’s company, which sponsored the survey, recently licensed and introduced Caphosol®, an advanced electrolyte solution for the treatment of OM. Additionally,



A survey found that many cancer patients are unaware that there is a treatment for a common chemotherapy side effect.

the company launched a patient education and support Web site at www.careom.com as part of its CARE OM™ (Caphosol Relieves Oral Mucositis) initiative.

The five OM symptoms most frequently mentioned by survey participants were redness and swelling (54 percent), burning pain (47 percent), difficulty opening one’s mouth (46 percent), difficulty speaking (40 percent), and tooth and/or gum disease (35 percent).

About OM

Oral mucositis is a painful inflammation of mucous membranes in the mouth. It interferes with a patient’s ability to eat and has a negative effect on quality of life.

The condition is estimated to affect as many as 400,000 cancer

patients each year. OM affects approximately 40 percent of cancer patients who receive chemotherapy, more than 70 percent of those undergoing conditioning therapy for bone marrow transplantation and virtually all patients receiving radiation therapy for head and neck cancer.

Diagnosing A Problem

Only half of survey respondents reported having received a formal diagnosis of OM and 25 percent were unable to find any treatment that relieved their symptoms. Those unmet medical needs may be due to a general perception that OM is not considered a serious condition—a sentiment voiced by 53 percent of the survey respondents.

“I don’t think there’s a great deal of awareness both in the media or a patient’s standpoint about this side effect,” explains Kenneth Miller, M.D., professor, medical oncology, Harvard Medical School. “It’s important that patients be proactive and they understand that this is a major complication associated with the use of high-dose chemotherapy and radiation therapy.”

To learn more about OM and its treatment options, visit www.careom.com.