

# Say no to pain: talk to your oncologist!

**“Cancer pain can be effectively managed; multiple treatments are available, and patients should not have to tolerate pain.”**

ESMO Guidelines 2021. Cancer Pain



The World Cancer Day (WCD) supports cancer awareness, education, and action to promote treatment, prevention, and care for all patients. This year, the **WCD calls** everyone to play their part in creating a cancer-free world by emphasizing the power of working together and making the difference to reduce the global impact of cancer.<sup>1</sup>

**Angelini Pharma responds to this call by highlighting the importance of proper communication on cancer pain that is still poor and undervalued today.**

Cancer patients experience pain very commonly because of the cancer itself, the cancer treatment, or a combination of both.<sup>2</sup> As reported by the European Society of Medical Oncology (ESMO) Guidelines 2021, pain affects more than 60% of patients with advanced, metastatic, or terminal disease. However, cancer pain has also a frequent occurrence at the earlier stages of disease: around a third of patients who have undergone curative treatment experience pain.<sup>2</sup>

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***“Pain management in cancer care could be improved through better physician-patient communication<sup>3</sup>”***

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Pain management in cancer care could be improved through better physician-patient communication, particularly with respect to encouraging and facilitating patient involvement in discussing their pain experiences.<sup>3</sup>

According to ESMO guidelines, as an integral part of cancer care, **doctors and nurses may ask** cancer patients questions to assess their pain, **and patients are called to provide an accurate answer** to receive the appropriate pain relief and management.<sup>2</sup> It is important that patients tell their doctor or nurse about their pain providing as much as information they can, including any new pain arising from new or unknown locations.<sup>2</sup>

As also stated by ESMO Guidelines, doctors will be happy to answer any question patients might have about their pain treatment and management.<sup>2</sup>

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***“Doctors will be happy to answer any question patients might have about their pain treatment<sup>2</sup>”***

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Four simple questions may be helpful when talking with doctors or any healthcare professional involved in pain care:<sup>2</sup>

- **What is the cause of my pain?**
- **What pain relief options do I have?**
- **What are the possible advantages and disadvantages of these options?**
- **How likely am I to experience these advantages and disadvantages?**

Doctors will recommend one or more approaches to pain management, according to patients' clinical status and preferences.<sup>2</sup>

Being on cancer patients' shoes is not easy, and patients may need more encouragement to be more proactive to talk to doctors about their needs.<sup>3</sup>

During the #worldcancerday, Angelini Pharma renews its commitment to cancer pain relief by inviting patients to talk more with their oncologist about this symptom and calling all doctors to raise more questions about what their patients are really feeling and experiencing during their battle against cancer.

#### References

1. <https://www.worldcancerday.org/about/2022-2024-world-cancer-day-campaign>. Last accessed November 2022
2. ESMO Guidelines 2021. Cancer Pain
3. Street RL Jr, et al. Patient Educ Couns. 2010; 80 (1): 42-47