



# Effective Health Care

## Decision Support Tools for Treatment of Pre-malignancies or Early-stage Cancers in Adults

### Nomination Summary Document

#### Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- Decision support tools for treatment of pre-malignancies or early-stage cancer in adults will go forward for refinement as a systematic review. The scope of this topic, including populations, interventions, comparators, and outcomes, will be further developed in the refinement phase.
- When key questions have been drafted, they will be posted on the AHRQ Web site and open for public comment. To sign up for notification when this and other Effective Health Care (EHC) Program topics are posted for public comment, please go to <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/join-the-email-list/>.

#### Topic Description

**Nominator:** Organization

**Nomination Summary:** The nominator is interested in the comparative effectiveness of decision support tools to help inform adults with pre-malignancies or early stage cancers about potential benefits and risks of their treatment options. The nominator seeks better understanding of how cancer patients and their healthcare professionals choose among management strategies where multiple options and uncertainties exist.

**Staff-Generated PICO- Decision support tools for consumer decision making**

**Population(s):** Adult patients with pre-malignancies (e.g., ductal carcinoma in situ [DCIS]) or early-stage cancers (e.g., low-risk prostate cancer)

**Intervention(s):** Decision aids (DAs) developed for use by patients, their families, and caregivers. DAs include but are not limited to interactive computer programs, nomograms, decision boards, videos and audio booklets/pamphlets

**Comparator(s):** No intervention; usual care; different DAs; combination of strategies

**Outcome(s):** Patient knowledge; decisional conflict; role in treatment decision making; patient satisfaction; health-related quality of life (HR-QOL); patient anxiety, depression or emotional distress; resource use

**Staff-Generated PICO- Decision support tools for clinician decision making**

**Population(s):** Healthcare professionals involved in treatment decisions for adult patients with pre-malignancies (e.g., ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS)) or early-stage cancers (e.g., low-risk prostate cancer)

**Intervention(s):** Tools developed for use by healthcare professionals. These include but are not limited to distribution of printed educational materials (e.g., including clinical

practice guidelines, journals), educational meetings, audit and feedback, and computerized decision support systems

**Comparator(s):** No intervention; usual care; different interventions; combination of strategies

**Outcome(s):** Effects on adoption of intervention; changes in clinicians' (providers) attitudes/practice behavior; impact on management/follow-up; provider satisfaction; degree of participation by providers in decision making

**Key Questions from Nominator:**

1. What is the comparative effectiveness of using versus not using clinical decision support tools to select immediate treatment versus observation and improve net health outcomes for patients with pre-malignancies (e.g., ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS)) or very early-stage malignancies (e.g., indolent non-Hodgkin lymphoma when initially diagnosed and with low tumor burden, low-risk early prostate cancer)?
2. Which types of decision support tools are most effective, and what is the best way to use them (e.g., viewed by patient alone, shared decision-making)?
3. What is known about how patients and their physicians choose between management strategies for pre-malignancies (e.g., DCIS) or very early-stage malignancies (e.g., indolent non-Hodgkin lymphoma when initially diagnosed and with low tumor burden, low-risk early prostate cancer)?

## Considerations

- The topic meets all EHC Program selection criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.)
- The rapid emergence of new cancer therapies has increased management options for patients and healthcare professionals. Most therapies differ with respect to potential benefits and harms, and these benefits and harms may vary across individuals, creating a very complex set of decisions and trade-offs that may be difficult for providers to convey to patients. Therefore, researchers have investigated better ways of informing patients to help them participate in choosing their treatment. One such approach has been the development of decision support tools. Decision aids are evidence-based decision support tools designed to prepare clients to participate in making specific and deliberated choices among healthcare options and supplement (rather than replace) counseling by healthcare professionals about therapeutic options.
- There is a gap in current knowledge regarding how cancer patients and their healthcare professionals choose among management strategies where multiple options and uncertainties exist. There is a need to assess the approaches used, and the clinical impact of the components of decision support tools, as different sets of interventions and outcome measures are used across research studies. A systematic review focused on treatment decisions for pre-malignancies or early-stage cancer could synthesize current findings on decision support tools and convey that information to healthcare professionals, patients, and other decision makers.