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ASPECTS: A Study of Patients ExperienCes of TreatmentS

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Each year in the UK thousands of patients with cancer will decide whether to have palliative chemotherapy. Because the survival benefits are modest and the toxicities significant, the decision may be extremely difficult. Making the right choice to undergo treatment is important and current UK health policy encourages patients to be involved in this decision.

Most patients undergoing palliative chemotherapy do so as outpatients, precluding health professionals from witnessing most of what they experience. Although quantitative data about symptom relief, toxic side effects and quality of life are routinely collected in trials of palliative chemotherapy regimens, there is a paucity of qualitative research exploring, in an open-ended way, how patients experience this form of treatment.

In this poster we describe the study design for ASPECTS (**A Study of Patients ExperienCes of TreatmentS**). Qualitative research methods (including recordings and observations of oncology consultations, and in-depth interviews with 50 patients, their carers and clinicians in the west of England), are being employed to: describe, comprehensively, patients' experiences of palliative chemotherapy; explore the ways in which information about patients' experiences of palliative chemotherapy is included in the process surrounding treatment decision-making; and consider ways in which this might be improved.