

## Navigating a cancer diagnosis: Helping patients understand their pathology results

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**H**ealth literacy is associated with improved health outcomes. Primary care providers usually provide the majority of care to patients and are also usually the first point of contact for patients within a health system. A cancer diagnosis relies on pathology and laboratory medicine for the diagnosis and management of the disease. However, pathology reports are often encoded in jargon that patients cannot understand and patients do not always have direct access to their reports, limiting the patient's ability to make educated decisions. A new vision of health literacy in relation to pathology information is needed. What can we do so that all this scientific knowledge, which is currently unattainable due to the type of language being used, can be shared and used as a tool to inform people who are affected by cancer so they can make informed decisions about their own lives?

This session explains how oncologists, patient advocates and primary health care doctors can utilize pathology results to increase their patients' understanding of their diagnosis and lab test results, thereby increasing patients' health literacy. This session will focus on equipping participants with a toolkit of pathology resources and strategies to effectively explain their pathology report, diagnosis, lab test results and follow-up diagnostic care. These strategies are discussed within the context of both high and low-middle income country realities. Working towards this objective provides opportunities to strengthen healthcare systems and empower patients and conduct research to determine the impact of different approaches. It's imperative to work with all stakeholders across healthcare to advocate for a fundamental shift in the way we deliver knowledge that is built around the needs of people and their communities, in particular the knowledge and understanding of patients' diagnoses.

The goal is to raise awareness about the relevance of the pathology results for the patient's understanding of their treatment and prognosis and how patients can use the pathology results as a decision-making tool.

### Biography

Lotte Mulder is Director of Leadership and Empowerment at American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP), Greater Chicago Area, USA.

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