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Life After Risk Models: An NCI Project to Develop a Web Site to Educate Cancer Information Seekers about Cancer Risk Concepts. Office of Education and Special Initiatives, National Cancer Institute.

Arguably, as we make advances in science, we will be able to further refine risk models related to specific cancers. As promising as this is, there continues to be a disconnect between the science and the application for the average person. As more cancer risk information is circulated into the mainstream, people are more confused by the risk factors for cancer and risk-reducing behaviors. Making informed decisions about cancer risk reduction in this climate can be difficult for the average person. Frequently, individuals are encouraged to talk with their personal physicians to assess their cancer risk and make decisions about risk reduction. While this strategy may be ideal, there are relatively few educational materials designed to assist patients and physicians with these discussions. (Schwartz and Woloshin, 1999). Additionally, physician time constraints can make effective risk communication less likely (Schwartz, Woloshin, & Welch, 1999). A more informed consumer can assist in doctor-patient risk communications.

As part of our mission, the National Cancer Institute's Office of Education and Special Initiatives (OESI) addresses risk as an important concept for the general public to understand in terms of its personal risk and to help it make informed decisions about risk-reducing behaviors. In fall 2002, we set out to develop a Web site to educate health information seekers about risk concepts. The goal is to help users understand their cancer risk and to put that risk into perspective. Throughout this process, we continue to meet with both challenges and excitement related to this ambitious effort. During this presentation, we will:

- Discuss the importance of this resource.
- Detail our development process.
- Identify key challenges.
- Emphasize the importance of connecting the science (risk modeling) to practical application for the public.

Reference:

Woloshin, S; Schwartz, L. M.; Moncur, M.; Gabriel, S.; Tosteson, A. N. A. (2001). Assessing values for health: Numeracy matters. *Medical Decision Making*. Vol 21, 382-390.