

The National Cancer Institute is engaged in a critically important initiative to restructure the way randomized treatment clinical trials are proposed, reviewed, and implemented. This initiative capitalizes on the opportunities availed by internet-based innovations. Specifically, NCI seeks to evaluate its State-of-the-Science (SOTS) Meetings project that offers multi-media presentations of the SOTS meetings. The SOTS web site disseminates with expediency and immediacy, the most recent cancer research results to a potentially vast audience of scientists. The proposed project will evaluate the effect of these presentations on the efficiency and effectiveness of procedures for promoting and managing NCI-sponsored treatment trials, and assess the contribution of the web site to the results of these presentations.

This short on-line survey that seeks comment from SOTS web site browsers serves as part of a larger study that will identify key oncology researchers throughout the country who will be asked to evaluate the SOTS web site. The OMB package for the primary study, which will provide respondent compensation for completing a longer survey, is near final form and will be submitted for OMB approval in the next few weeks.

The cost for making SOTS meetings' presentations available in an interactive format on the internet is high; therefore, NCI needs a cost-benefit measure of the value that the added information provided by this new multi-media web-site is greater than a simple text-only summary of the SOTS meetings. Information about the "worthiness" of the site in comparison with other health science resources (e.g., journal subscriptions, organization memberships) will provide valuable insight into how a researcher might objectively value this type of educational format compared to more traditional sources of scientific information, and help NCI discern whether they should continue with the multi-media SOTS site.

Question 7 on the short on-line survey informs respondents that there are no plans to charge browsers for viewing the site. Free access to the SOTS web site is an important feature to allow expedient dissemination of new scientific findings to the oncology field. The responses to question 7 will be evaluated along with responses from identified oncologists to a similar question on the larger project. The larger questionnaire will also seek researcher's evaluation of the economic utility of the text-only site as well as the multi-media web-site. Together, the respondent's satisfaction with this site in contrast to other health-related information sources will provide key evidence about the utility of the SOTS site.