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## **Demand for Spanish-Language Cancer Web Materials Quadruples; Internet Resources and Access Remain Scarce**

Los Angeles – Although Spanish-speaking cancer patients are rapidly increasing their search for patient education resources on the Internet, there are very few Spanish-language Web sites available to provide this information, according to a study presented October 28, 2007, at the American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology's 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Los Angeles.

Spanish-speaking cancer patients were also shown to have more limited access to the Internet compared to English-speaking users of cancer information Web sites, based on the user patterns of the two groups.

“There is an urgent need for more Web-based information to be more available to Spanish-speaking patients with cancer, and Internet access needs to be more widely available,” said Charles Simone II, M.D., lead author of the study and a radiation oncologist at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. “The increased knowledge gained among these patients will help to eliminate healthcare disparities and lead to improved medical outcomes.”

The Spanish-language cancer information Web site, *OncoLink en español*, quadrupled their number of unique visitors last year, from 7,000 visitors per month in January 2006 to nearly 29,000 monthly visitors by the end of the year. More than 200,000 users visited the Web site in 2006.

In contrast, the English-language version of the site, OncoLink, had nearly 2 million visitors last year, although their number of unique visitors did not increase throughout the year. *OncoLink en español* was launched in 2005 by OncoLink, one of the oldest and largest Internet-based cancer information resources. Both sites are managed by the University of Pennsylvania.

The study shows that *OncoLink en español* users were less likely to browse the Internet during weekends and morning hours, compared to the users who browsed OncoLink, suggesting that they are accessing the Internet more through work or specialized services.

In addition to when they accessed the Internet, *OncoLink en español* users also differed on the types of cancers they searched for, as well as the timing and method of their Internet search patterns.

“Awareness of these differences can assist cancer education Web sites to tailor their content to best meet the needs of their Spanish-speaking users,” said Dr. Simone.

The study was carried out using AWStats, a Web-data analyzing program, to collect and compare statistical data from the secure servers of both language versions of OncoLink.

**For more information on radiation therapy in English and in Spanish, visit**

**[www.rtanswers.org](http://www.rtanswers.org).**

The abstract, “*The Utilization of Radiation Oncology Web-based Resources in Spanish-speaking Oncology Patients*,” will be presented for poster viewing starting at 10:00 a.m, Sunday, October 28, 2007. To speak to the study author, Charles Simone, II, M.D, please call Beth Bukata or Nicole Napoli October 28-31, 2007, in the ASTRO Press Room at the Los Angeles Convention Center at 213-743-6222 or 213-743-6223. You may also e-mail them at [bethb@astro.org](mailto:bethb@astro.org) or [nicolen@astro.org](mailto:nicolen@astro.org).

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