Dyadic Perceptions of the Decision Process in Families Living With Lung Cancer

Lyndsey M. Miller, PhD, RN, Donald R. Sullivan, MD, MA, and Karen S. Lyons, PhD

A cancer diagnosis affects both patients and family members, and gives rise to many decisions that families often work through and process together. However, the life-changing nature of cancer diagnoses do not necessarily bring about greater communication or agreement among families (Siminoff, Dorflinger, Agyemang, Baker, & Wilson-Genderson, 2012; Siminoff, Rose, Zhang, & Zyzanski, 2006; Venetis, Greene, Checton, & Magsamen-Conrad, 2015; Zhang, Zyzanski, & Siminoff, 2010). Indeed, family communication often breaks down in the context of cancer (Badr & Taylor, 2006; Zhang & Siminoff, 2003a). This may be especially true in families affected by lung cancer—the leading cause of cancer-related mortality in the United States (Howlader et al., 2013)—because of the potential for blame associated with smoking and family conflict surrounding smoking cessation (Badr & Taylor, 2006; Lobchuk, Murdoch, McClement, & McPherson, 2008; Siminoff, Wilson-Genderson,