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Education and Preparation for Nuclear Medicine Procedures in Neuroendocrine Tumor Patients

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BACKGROUND: In 2007, a coalition of health care organizations formed around the a unified goal of improving imaging safety and quality for adults (Image Wisely) and children (Image Gently). In 2008, the Society of Nuclear Medicine (SNMMI) joined this coalition, embracing its role in providing outreach to the patient community on the use of molecular imaging and reducing exposure to radiation. Since then, the Society has created an annual patient program to reach patients and caregivers, and is continually seeking input from the patient community to improve the program and other online educational resources.

METHODS: An online survey was completed by over 700 patients and caregivers in May 2017. The survey was developed by SNMMI in consultation with its Patient Advocacy Advisory Board to help SNMMI members better understand current practice and future needs regarding patient care and concerns on radiation exposure.

RESULTS: Of the 700 respondents, 30% identified as NET patients. Patients were asked to rank how safe they felt nuclear imaging and therapy are on a scale of 1-5 (1 being very safe, 5 being unsafe). Those undergoing imaging averaged 2.36 while those undergoing therapy felt it was safer scoring 2.00. 70% of the NET patients undergoing imaging reported tracking the number of scans the received with only 33% answering that they were not concerned about the number of

scans they received. 44% of NET imaging patients claim to receive no safety information regarding nuclear medicine imaging, while none claim not to have received safety information regarding nuclear medicine therapy.

CONCLUSION: Patients have concerns about nuclear medicine scan safety which are not being adequately addressed. Considerations should be made by prescribing physician to address patient concerns.