Evolution of Antifibrotic Therapy in IPF

Lisa Lancaster:

For patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis who were on the antifibrotics that are FDA approved for idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, we can certainly help their compliance, and one way to do that is by thorough education. Make sure your patients understand what the drugs provide, what they do, what they can't do. They won't necessarily make a patient feel better. They won't change that, but they do slow disease progression. So expectations and matching reality with those patient expectations are key. Also, helping patients understand that the medications can be dose adjusted, titrated up and down as symptoms allow, to help improve compliance, tolerance of side effects as well.

Antifibrotic therapy for patients with IPF is in a state of evolution. We are just starting. The disease of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis is pathobiology, its management, is really like an iceberg, and we have just uncovered the tip of the iceberg. We have much more work in clinical trials, to define the disease and find better therapies. I think some of the newest information in interstitial lung diseases, especially the fibrotic interstitial lung diseases, is that there are several clinical trials that should be providing us information in the near future on whether or not antifibrotics are helpful in different disease states outside of IPF and in the connective tissue diseases.

I certainly want to encourage providers to consider sending their IPF patients and fibrotic lung disease patients to Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation Centers of Excellence who have the tools and people with expertise, plus additional education, to really help patients with fibrotic lung disease and to help co-manage the disease with a local provider. Certainly making a correct diagnosis is important, but beyond that, the education piece and enrolling patients in clinical trials, so that we can find better therapies in the future is critical.

We're trying to understand the genetics of these diseases as well. And there are studies that are going on at our center and at National Jewish, trying to better understand the genetics of patients and their families with fibrotic lung disease.

So I encourage providers to please refer your patients to Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation Centers of Excellence so they can consider participating in these programs.