Genetics and Personalized Medicine for Patients with Pulmonary Fibrosis

Dr. Timothy Whelan: We are in Nashville, at the PFF Summit, and this morning there was a session on genetics and personalized medicine. So, Dr. Danoff, what did you think about the session?

Dr. Sonye Danoff: I thought it was a great session, and I think covered some really important topics for clinicians who are taking care of patients who have familial pulmonary fibrosis. Those are the families where there's more than one family member who has IPF. The issue that they were talking about was about genetic testing, and the availability of clinical genetic testing for those patients.

I thought it was important to know that, not only do some patients have the genetic mutations that cause or associated with pulmonary fibrosis, but some patients just have short telomeres, that can be associated with pulmonary fibrosis. What did you think about the genetic counselors comments about testing?

Dr. Timothy Whelan: I thought it was also very informative. I think that the genetic counselor reinforced that we have to make sure that for patients that don't have disease, that a certified genetic counselor is truly talking to them about what the testing means. I also thought that this availability of the testing is becoming much more available, and so it is things that people should consider. It may be a way to give you more confidence of the diagnosis of IPF.

Unfortunately, the testing, we're still on the early stages. There are probably many unidentified genes that we haven't even figured out yet. So a negative test maybe is not as helpful as a positive test, but I felt like overall this is a potential opportunity for the future, and in particular therapies for the future will likely capitalize on this genetic testing.