

UCSF

UC San Francisco Previously Published Works

Title

Newly Diagnosed Breast Cancer Patient Informational Needs Across Visits: Using AI to Mine Question Lists

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8dc562x2>

Authors

Camarena, Alondra

Barkin, Joshua

Garza, Venezia

et al.

Publication Date

2026-05-27

Background

- The Breast Care Center (BCC) employs post-bac interns to provide a Question List (QL) service to patients scheduled for their first visit
- The QL helps patients prepare by identifying and organizing questions they would like to discuss with their provider during the appointment.
- Newly diagnosed patients often have informational needs that are captured in the QL as they prepare for their first appointment

The pre-visit QL represents a valuable resource to understand informational needs before the first clinical consultation occurs

Project Goals

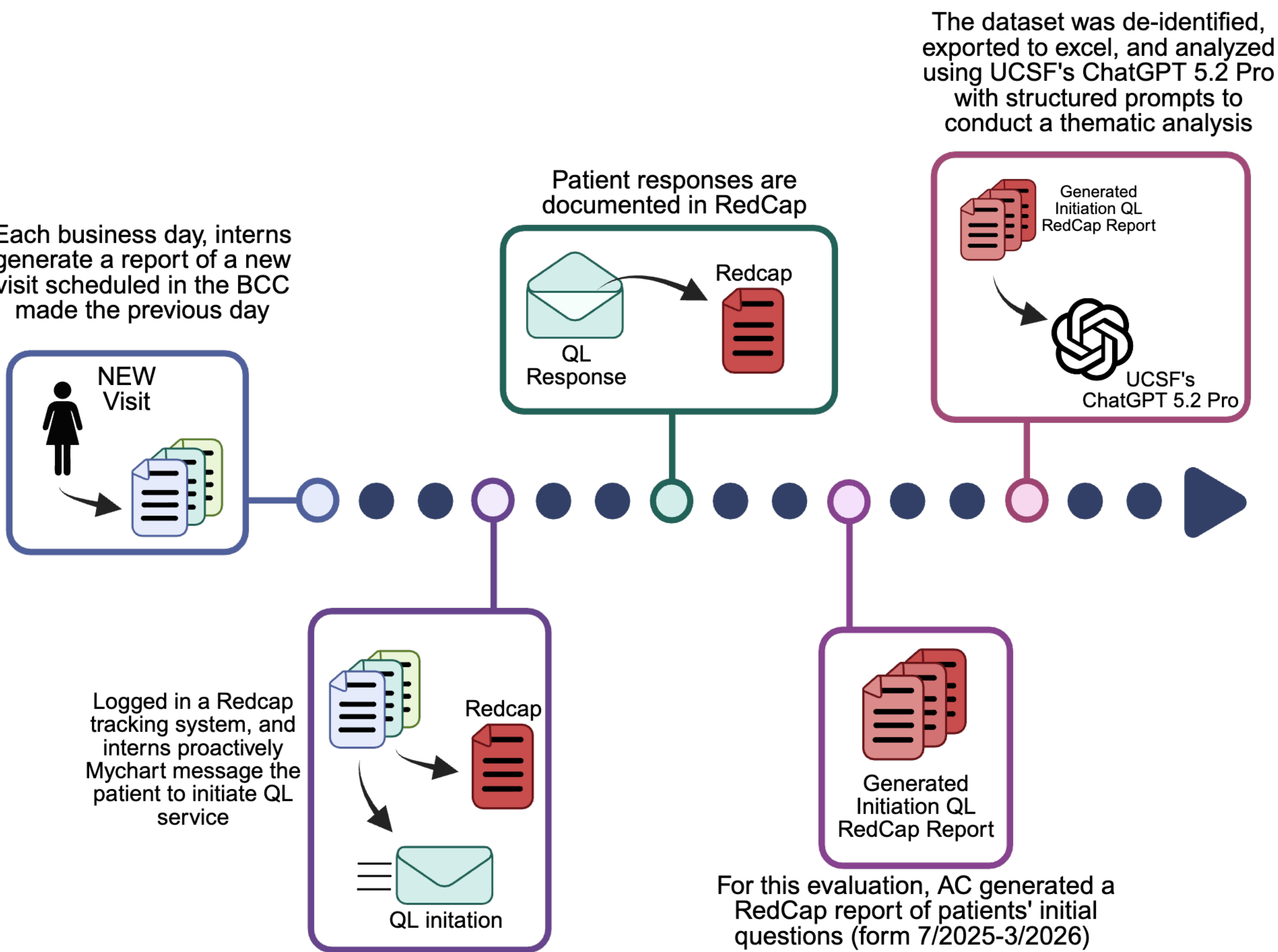
Goal: To identify recurring patient informational needs captured in the QL prepared for initial visits across breast cancer care pathway
Breast Surgeon -> Breast Oncologist -> Plastic Surgeon

Current State	Target State
Post-bac interns capture patient's questions for provider to review during appointment	Patient pre-visit questions are ALSO systematically analyzed in aggregate to identify actionable patterns in informational needs

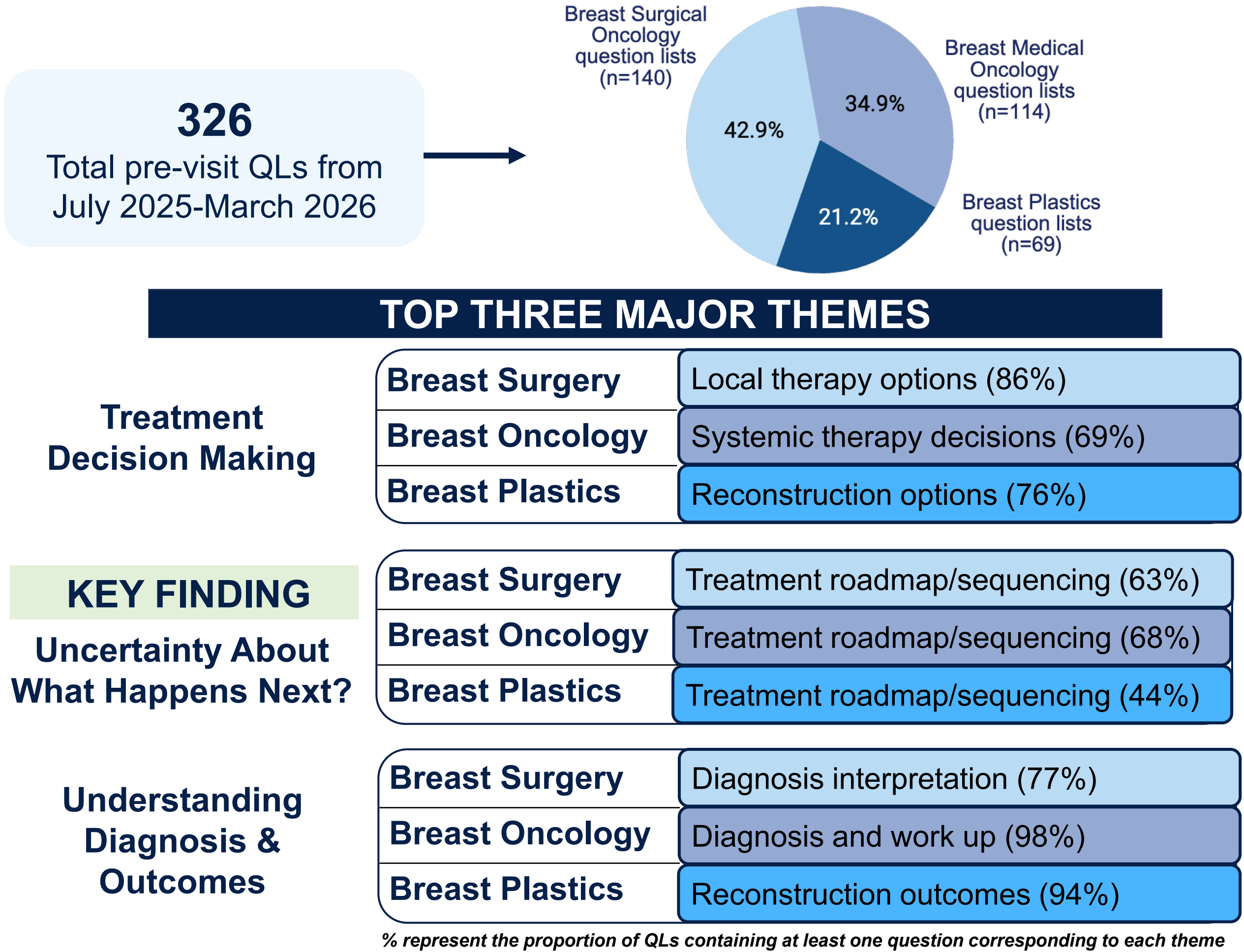
PROBLEM STATEMENT: Although the BCC collects hundreds of patient-submitted pre-visit questions, there is no systematic approach to identify common patterns or themes in these questions. This limits visibility into patient informational needs across the care pathway. To address this gap, we used AI to analyze pre-visit question data.

WE USED AI TO ANALYZE PRE-VISIT QUESTIONS ACROSS THE PATIENT JOURNEY AND FOUND CONSISTENT INFORMATIONAL NEEDS AND UNCERTAINTY ABOUT “WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?”

Project Plan and Intervention(s)



Project Outcomes, Results & Impact



Conclusions, Next Steps, & Lessons Learned

- Conclusions**
- Pre-visit questions revealed measurable knowledge gaps across specialties, with distinct specialty-specific informational needs
 - The most persistent finding across the care pathway was uncertainty about the overall treatment roadmap of “what happens next”
- Lessons Learned**
- Patients are actively engaging in decision making prior to their first visit but often lack structured information to support this process
 - Questions reflected misconceptions that can be addressed with pre-visit education before the visit
- Next Steps**
- Develop a patient journey roadmap to guide patients through the care pathway
 - Develop and integrate specialty-specific educational resources anchored to the roadmap