Language, the Literature, and the Patient

October 01, 2005
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The articles and accompanying commentaries in ONCOLOGY provide important clinical information but also an opportunity to call attention to language projecting attitudes and judgments that are unintended, probably unconscious, and generally unchallenged. We note that recent articles and reviews refer to the “patient having failed” treatment; patients are identified with their cancer as if they are one, and the description of therapy as “salvage” indirectly compares the human experience of treating patients to saving, rescuing, or restoring goods.

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Disclosures: The author(s) have no significant financial interest or other relationship with the manufacturers of any products or providers of any service mentioned in this article.

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