The patient experience.

Abstract:
The impact of improved treatments for the management of hormone-sensitive breast cancer extends beyond clinical responses. Thanks to appropriate literature and access to the internet, patient awareness of treatment options has grown and patients are now, in many cases, able to engage their oncologists in informed conversations regarding treatment and what to expect in terms of efficacy and safety. Indeed, patients realize that although there is no cure for metastatic disease, treatment can greatly reduce the risk of progression and in the adjuvant setting, where treatment is administered with a curative intent, current treatment options reduce the risk of relapse. The approval of letrozole throughout the breast cancer continuum has provided patients with many reassuring options. The improvement in outcome with letrozole is achieved without a detrimental effect on overall quality of life. Adverse events such as hot flushes, arthralgia, vaginal dryness, and potential osteoporosis are most significant from the patient’s perspective, and it is important that caregivers pay attention to patients experiencing these events, as they can impact compliance unless effectively explained and managed. The major benefits of letrozole are to improve prospects for long-term survivorship in the adjuvant setting and to delay progression and the need for chemotherapy in the metastatic setting.