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## Exploring the Impact of Surgery Delay & Breast Cancer Outcomes at ASCO 2021: A Look at Equity in Surgical Outcomes

### Announcer:

You're listening to *Project Oncology* on ReachMD. On this episode, sponsored by Lilly, we're going to hear from Dr. Samilia Obeng-Gyasi, who's an assistant professor of surgery at Ohio State University. Dr. Obeng-Gyasi will be discussing her talk presented at the 2021 American Society of Clinical Oncology Annual Meeting, titled, "*The Impact of Surgery Delay and Breast Cancer Outcomes*". Here's Dr. Obeng-Gyasi now, giving us a recap of what she talked about at the conference, as well as the role health disparities play in this treatment space.

### Dr. Obeng-Gyasi:

Surgical delays have a significant impact on the patient and also on their clinical outcomes. Studies have shown that the time from biopsy-proven diagnosis to the first definitive surgery is one of the most anxiety-provoking times for patients. Also, patients who face significant delays in time-from-diagnosis or even from symptom-to-surgery are more likely to have a worse mortality.

Health disparities and healthcare disparities are driven by social determinants of health. Social determinants of health describe where people live, where they work, and where they play. Essentially, it's the living conditions within which people live their lives. And these conditions can have significant implications for access to healthcare and also the quality of healthcare. And so where someone lives, what kind of access to healthcare they have, what kind of resources they have available to them to tap into healthcare can have significant implications for their medical decision-making, can have significant implications for how they interface with the healthcare system itself, and consequently can have significant implications for their clinical outcomes and their overall health.

Health disparities and healthcare disparities have significant implications for surgical outcomes. Specifically they affect patients actually undergoing surgery, so surgery refusal or surgical omission. They also affect the types of surgeries patients may receive and also access to certain kinds of surgeries, such as reconstructive surgery.

The ways that clinicians and healthcare systems can improve upon surgical disparities is to take better information or better notes in the medical record about social determinants of health and try to understand how these may be affecting patients' ability to interface and interact with the health system. By addressing peoples' living conditions, it enables the healthcare system to mitigate some of these issues that patients face in access and care. And more importantly, it will help patients achieve health equity, which is to achieve their full health potential.

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