

Q: Dr. Liang, something struck me in your earlier presentation when you said that only about half of the patients that you treat are officially categorized as official lupus patients. So I wonder if you have some comments on how we as a lupus community can address this discrepancy because it has a big affect on funding for medical treatment and research money for lupus. To me it seems like a very big discrepancy!

Dr. Liang: It is. People are trying to address it by changing the criteria but I am not sure if that is going to be the final answer to all of this. I actually think we can solve this problem through the internet. We should use the internet to get to people in the early stages before they even know the word “lupus”. And if you look at some internet surveys, an increasing number of people go to the web to get information that is really important to them to make decisions and increasingly for health issues. And I think that is one way to capture people who don’t know they have lupus. In a study we undertook last summer we took an epidemiological defined average person with lupus and tried to explore the web to find out what they would get. We basically found no sites that would give them a differential diagnosis of what might be going on or what to do to as a diagnostic possibility. And so I think that medical websites have yet to hit their stride in maximizing the connective and algorithmic search, but I think that that will be the future of public outreach for health.