New Approaches to the Diagnosis of IPF

Dr. Timothy Whelan: Hi, I'm here with PILOT at the Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation Summit in Nashville. We had a great session late morning where we talked about diagnosing IPF, and in particular the abstract winner for the meeting presented her research, which is using technology that's often used in the ophthalmology office to image the eye. It's called OCT. They're using that in the lung using catheters and getting really interesting imaging that is new and potentially correlates very well with pathology. Very new science but exciting things to look for in the future.

In addition, investigators presented some of their data using large cohorts of individuals who had CT scan imaging, that do not have a clinical diagnosis of interstitial lung disease. What they are finding is that there's actually a lot more patients out there that have asymptomatic interstitial lung disease. What is exciting about this is it's a way to perhaps make a diagnosis earlier.

Finally the Vanderbilt Familial Pulmonary Fibrosis Group, they showed a bunch of their data, which has followed a large number of family cohorts and defined exactly how patients who are asymptomatic in those families, how their imaging looks and what kind of symptoms that they have. In addition, they're seeing that there's a lag time from findings on CT scans when people are asymptomatic to the time that they actually begin to have symptoms. And one of the interesting things that was talked about is that that looks like it's about eight years. Again, this is exciting because it's an opportunity to potentially intervene earlier in disease. It helps us, as investigators, figure out what is the right time to start screening patients.