

Effective Patient-Provider Communication

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Disclosures

- None

Outline

- What is effective communication and why is it important?
- Communication strategies in oncology and immunotherapy
- Tools for effective communication

"FOR ALL THE SOPHISTICATED DIAGNOSTIC TOOLS OF MODERN MEDICINE, THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN (*HEALTHCARE PROVIDER*) AND PATIENT REMAINS THE PRIMARY DIAGNOSTIC TOOL."

Adapted from Danielle Ofri "What patients say, what doctors hear"

Why is effective communication important?

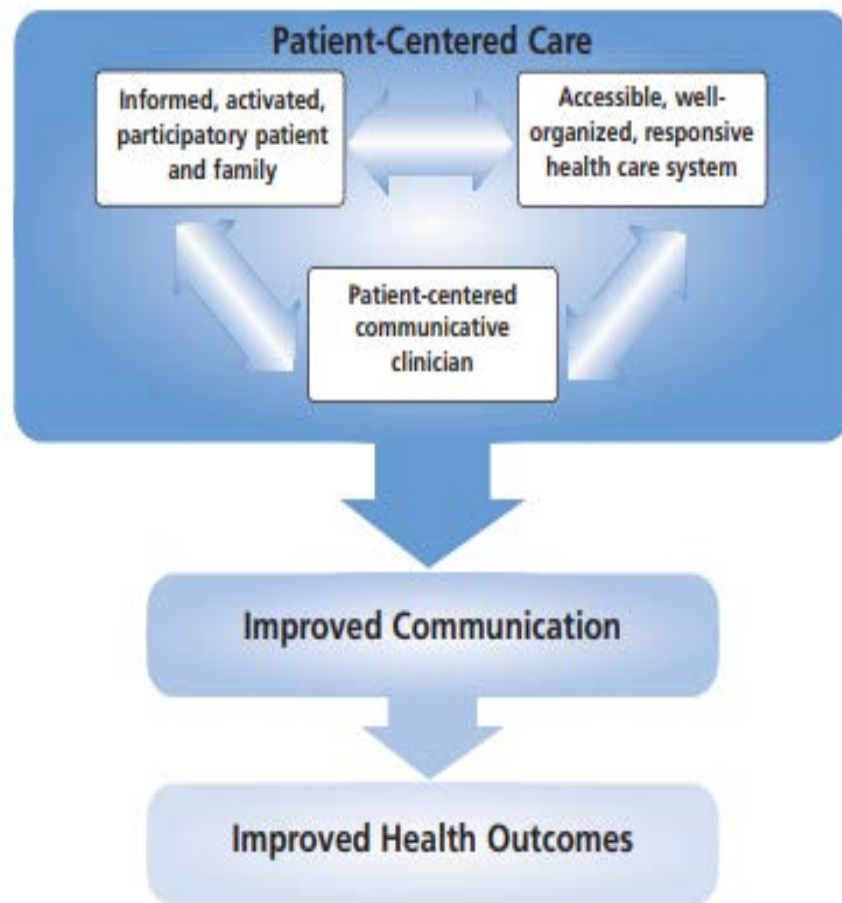
- Good communication can have important effects on the physical health of a patient
- Empirical research has identified better health, lower service use, and lower expenditures among more satisfied cancer survivors
 - Interventions to improve provider communication could lead to a more efficient use of healthcare resources (Rai et al., 2018, JNCCN)
- Communication in oncology care can have challenges

What is effective communication?

NCI Monograph – 2007

Framework for patient-centered communication in cancer care

- Fostering healthy relationships
- Exchanging information
- Responding to emotions
- Managing uncertainty
- Making decisions
- Enabling patient self-management



Epstein RM, Street RL, Jr. Patient-Centered Communication in Cancer Care: Promoting Healing and Reducing Suffering. National Cancer Institute, NIH Publication No. 07-6225. Bethesda, MD, 2007.

What is effective communication?

Core Communication Skills (ASCO Consensus Guideline)

- review history, establish goals for the conversation, and anticipate the needs and responses of the patient and family
- explore understanding of their disease and collaboratively set an agenda after inquiring what the patient and family wish to address and explaining what the clinician wishes to address
- engage in behaviors that actively foster trust, confidence, and collaboration
- provide information that is timely and oriented to the patient's concerns and preferences for information, check for understanding and document important discussions
- respond empathically when patients display emotion through verbal or nonverbal behavior

Communication strategies for patients on immunotherapy

Much is the same as with any cancer treatment but there are a few key aspects to consider:

- Patients and providers have different impressions of what is important to discuss
- Perceptions about the effectiveness of immunotherapy should be discussed
 - The most frequently chosen word patients used to describe immunotherapy treatment was 'hopeful'
- Half of patients in this study thought a discussion of treatment options would be useful
- Discussion of the differences between immunotherapy and traditional chemotherapy is important

Gillespy, K et al., ASCO poster 2017

Communication strategies for patients on immunotherapy

General patient education

- What is immunotherapy and how it works
- Response rates
- Toxicities
- Enforce and reinforce the need to call oncology team for any changes in health status

Communication strategies for patients on immunotherapy

Challenges

- Nomenclature
 - We still intermingle ‘chemotherapy’ with ‘immunotherapy’ which can lead to confusion among patients
- Patients need someone who will bridge communication between and among health care professionals and consulting services
- Many patients receive traditional treatments in addition to chemotherapy

Tools for effective communication

- Phone!
- Web charts and patient portals
- ONS IO patient education tool
- National guidelines
- Training programs
- ONS IO wallet card

The ONS Immunotherapy Wallet Card

IMMUNOTHERAPY WALLET CARD

NAME: _____

CANCER DX: _____

I-O AGENTS RCV'D: CHECKPOINT INHIBITOR(S)

CAR-T VACCINES ONCOLYTIC VIRAL THERAPY

MONOCLONAL ANTIBODIES

DRUG NAME(S): _____

IMMUNOTHERAPY TX START DATE: _____

OTHER CANCER MEDICATIONS: _____

NOTE: IMMUNOTHERAPY AGENTS ARE NOT CHEMOTHERAPY AND SIDE EFFECTS MUST BE MANAGED DIFFERENTLY. (SEE BACK)



IMMUNOTHERAPY CARD

IMMUNE-RELATED SIDE EFFECTS*, COMMON WITH CHECKPOINT INHIBITORS VARY IN SEVERITY AND MAY REQUIRE REFERRAL AND STEROIDS. PATIENTS HAVE A LIFETIME RISK OF IMMUNE-RELATED SIDE EFFECTS.

*MAY PRESENT AS RASH, DIARRHEA, ABDOMINAL PAIN, COUGH, FATIGUE, HEADACHES, VISION CHANGES, ETC. – CONFER WITH ONCOLOGY TEAM BEFORE CHANGING I-O REGIMEN OR STARTING SIDE EFFECT TREATMENT.

ONCOLOGY PROVIDER NAME _____

ONCOLOGY PROVIDER NO. _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____

CONTACT PHONE NO. _____

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Resources for effective communication

- Cancer Support Community Open to Options Program
 - <https://www.cancersupportcommunity.org/patient-doctor-communication-research>
- NCI Physicians Data Query (PDQ)
 - <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/coping/adjusting-to-cancer/communication-hp-pdq>
- Institute for Healthcare Improvement
 - <http://www.ihl.org/resources/Pages/Tools/Conversation-Ready-Toolkit-for-Clinicians.aspx>

Closing thoughts

- Immunotherapy has revolutionized cancer care and we are still learning how best to educate patients and families so that they are prepared for treatment, adverse events and survivorship
- Communication among health care providers is crucial
- Resources are available to help build communication skills and strategies
- Communication is a skill that we can all work to develop and improve

“THE SIMPLE THINGS A
(*HEALTHCARE PROVIDER*) SAYS
AND DOES TO CONNECT WITH
PATIENTS CAN MAKE A
DIFFERENCE IN HEALTH
OUTCOMES”

Adapted from Lauren Howe and Kari Leibowitz

Stanford University

Questions or comments?



- I have some questions for you!
- What are the most challenging questions you have received from patients about their immunotherapy treatment?
- How do you balance hope/expectations for patients starting immunotherapy?
- What tools or resources do you use to improve your communication skills?
- Thank you!
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