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The importance of patient-centered cancer care in oncology

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The demand for cancer care is increasing exponentially due to the increasing cancer incidence and the improved efficacy of cancer treatments. The number of new cancer cases will rise from 14.1 million in 2012 to 21.4 million in 2030, according to the World Health Organization International Agency for Research on Cancer. Communication skills are the foundation of patient-centered cancer care and have been placed high on the agenda by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence guidelines and the National Health Service in the UK as well as the American Society of Clinical Oncology released its first guidance statement on the cost of cancer care in August 2009, affirming that patient-physician cost communication is a critical component of high-quality care. This progressive recommendation has grown increasingly important in oncology practice today as the high costs of cancer care impose tremendous financial burden to patients, their families and the health care system. The communication skills are essential for oncology health professionals, who must regularly adjust their approach to meet the physiologic and psychosocial needs of patients. Timely communication is also needed among multidisciplinary oncology team members, primary care providers and specialists in palliative and end-of-life care. There must be communication to the individual patient, incorporating values, beliefs, culture, ethnicity, and preferred method of communicating. Its importance includes the patient's family members and social network. The communication can be improved by using effective verbal and non-verbal behaviors. Patients' non-verbal behaviors often indicate their concerns, which may include symptoms such as pain or dyspnea, attitudes such as friendliness or dominance, and personality characteristics such as shyness. The objective of this review is to understand the overall information and communication process with cancer patients. It is essential to deal with information and communication on a personalized basis for each individual, to receive the information the most suitable for a particular case.

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