

Disclosure of cancer diagnosis: what Iranian patients do prefer?

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From 1st International Congress on Neurobiology and Clinical Psychopharmacology and European Psychiatric Association Conference on Treatment Guidance Thessaloniki, Greece. 19-22 November 2009

Background

Doctors in Iran traditionally prefer to discuss the diagnosis of cancer with family members instead of patients. They are concerned about the psychological impacts of diagnostic disclosure. So it becomes an ethically controversial issue in doctor patient relationship which is practiced differently in various cultures and countries. The aim of this cross sectional descriptive study was to evaluate the amount of information that Iranian patients have and their preference for the disclosure of the cancer diagnosis.

Materials and methods

126 patients admitted for chemotherapy in three different sites were questioned about their knowledge of the diagnosis. Two different structured questionnaires were designed for the people who know and who didn't know their diagnosis. For the former, the survey concerned their psychological reactions to their situations, whether they would prefer to know about their diagnosis. For the latter, the questionnaire included their preference whether and how to know the diagnosis.

Results

60.31% of the patients knew their diagnosis and 39.68% didn't know. Among the subjects who didn't know their diagnosis, 88% preferred to be more informed about their diagnosis and 68% had some psychological reaction to their situations in spite of their lack of knowledge. Among the subjects who knew their diagnosis, 73.68% preferred to know their diagnosis, 92.1 % preferred to be informed directly by their physicians.

Conclusions

The majority of Iranian patients with malignancy want to know the truth and they prefer to be informed directly by their doctors.

Published: 22 April 2010

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doi:10.1186/1744-859X-9-S1-S165

Cite this article as: Faridhosseini et al.: Disclosure of cancer diagnosis: what Iranian patients do prefer?. *Annals of General Psychiatry* 2010 9(Suppl 1):S165.

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