Optimizing Patient-Centered Communication Across the Cancer Control Continuum: The Role of Affective Science?

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Quality of Care

Aims for the 21st Century Health Care System

• Safe
• Effective
• **Patient-centered**
• Timely
• Efficient
• Equitable
NCI Research Priority

• NCI supports research focused on facilitating the measurement, monitoring, and improvement of patient-centered cancer care with an aim to minimize the cancer burden.

• An area of emphasis: communication between patients/family and members of health care delivery teams.

http://outcomes.cancer.gov/areas/pcc
Patient-Centered Communication

Patient-Centered Communication Functions

- Responding to Emotions
- Exchanging Information
- Managing Uncertainty
- Making Decisions
- Enabling Patient Self-Management
- Fostering Healing Relationships

Health Outcomes

This diagram illustrates the interconnected functions of patient-centered communication, highlighting how different aspects of communication interrelate to influence health outcomes.
Understanding the Clinical Context of Cancer-related Care
Cancer-related Care: A Complex Web of Communication

**PRE-DX** → **DX** → **RX** → **POST-RX** → **EOL**

**FAMILY**

**PATIENT**

**MULTIPLE CLINICIANS**
- Primary Care Physician
- Oncologists
- Genetic Counselors
- Surgeon
- Nurses
- Pharmacists
- Social Workers
- CAM Practitioners
- Lab Technicians

Inpatient, Outpatient, Multiple Organizations

In person, Telephone, E-mail
Cancer-related Care

• Conversations between patient/family and multiple clinical teams
  – Across multiple healthcare organizations
  – Across different care settings
  – Across different communication media

• It is often left up to the patient to make sense of all these conversations

• Patients may or may not be aware of communication within and across clinical teams
• Conversations are influenced by several predisposing, enabling, and reinforcing factors at the individual, group/team, organization/system level, for example:
  – Patient/family social network
  – Clinician training
  – Team functioning and norms
  – Organization culture
  – Reimbursement policies
Cancer-related Care

• Conversations within the context of “emotionally charged” situations
  – Test indicating predisposition to cancer
  – Abnormal cancer screening test
  – Confirmed dx of cancer
  – Test suggesting treatment is not likely to work or remission not likely to last
  – Dx of new primary or cancer recurrence
  – Transition to end of life care
Cancer-related Care

• Nature of conversations and their impact may vary across the age spectrum
  – Pediatrics
  – Adolescent and Young Adults
  – Adults
  – Seniors
Challenges

• Measurement

• Longitudinal monitoring

• Interventions: Multi-level
  – Individual
  – Team
  – Organization