NCCS CPAT Symposium Workshop

Communication & Language in Cancer

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Agenda

- Patient/Doctor Communication
- Group Role Playing Exercise
- Discussion and Wrap Up
## Patient/Doctor Communication

### Approaches to communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient Centered</th>
<th>Doctor Centered</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solicit and acknowledge patient concerns to build agenda</td>
<td>Sets agenda based on biomedical issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asks explicitly about patient’s thoughts</td>
<td>Assumes patient will volunteer thoughts if important</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourages patients to express their concerns</td>
<td>Tends to focus conversation away from feelings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solicit patient involvement in decision-making</td>
<td>Regards decision making largely based on MD judgment</td>
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Patient/Doctor Communication

- Information management
  - What amount of info do patients wish to have?
  - Quality of life issues need discussed
  - Number of patient issues is surrogate for distress and issues with adjustment
  - Patient misunderstanding common
  - Phrasing and word usage matters
    - Goals of care: ‘Nothing more I can do’ vs. ‘Need to transition focus from cancer therapy to quality of life focus’

- Prognosis discussion difficult and variable between MDs
Patient/Doctor Communication

- Recommendations for managing emotions
  - MD should not assume patients will request help
  - Encounter aims
    - Provide cognitive data for patient understanding
    - Provide emotional data about patient feelings
  - MD should solicit emotional data from patients to detect distress and issues
  - Patients need to be forthcoming with cognitive/emotional concerns
    - Cognitive – Treatment side effects
    - Emotional – Psychological, financial, social
Patient/Doctor Communication

- Opportunities for MD improvement
- MD experience alone is not always effective
- Educational techniques are effective in improving communication skills

- Encourage patients and caregivers to be proactive in their communication about cognitive and emotional concerns with their care team