

Patients' Perceptions of Receiving a Diagnosis of a Haematological Malignancy, following the SPIKES Protocol

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Abstract : Objective: Sharing devastating news with patients is often considered the most difficult task of doctors. This study aimed to explore patients' perceptions of receiving bad news including which features improve the experience and which areas need refining. Methods: A questionnaire was written based on the steps of the SPIKES model for breaking bad news. 20 patients receiving treatment for a haematological malignancy completed the questionnaire. Results: Overall, the results are promising as most patients praised their consultation. 'Poor' was more commonly rated by women and participants aged 45-64. The main differences between the 'excellent' and 'poor' consultations include the doctor's sensitivity and checking the patients' understanding. Only 35% of patients were asked their existing knowledge and 85% of consultations failed to discuss the impact of the diagnosis on daily life. Conclusion: This study agreed with the consensus of existing literature. The commended aspects include consultation set-up and information given. Areas patients felt needed improvement include doctors determining the patient's existing knowledge and exploring how the diagnosis will affect the patient's life. With a poorer prognosis, doctors should work on conveying appropriate hope. The study was limited by a small sample size and potential recall bias.

Keywords : cancer, diagnosis, haematology, patients

Conference Title : ICH 2015 : International Conference on Hematology

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : September 25-26, 2015