

Patient-Provider Communication in Colorectal Cancer: What Are Oncologists' Challenges Internationally?

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A. Background

Importance of Patient Communication

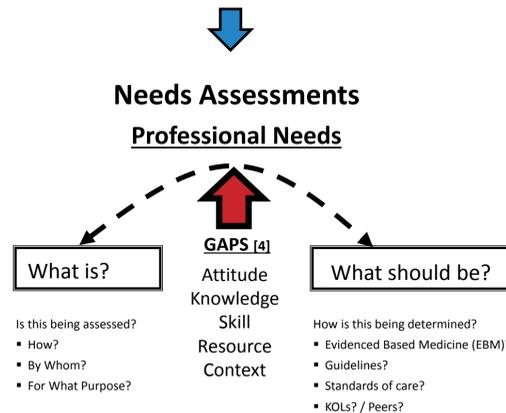
- Demonstrated link between quality and nature of patient-provider communication and patient outcomes [1]
 - ↓ psychological distress
 - ↑ adherence to treatment plan
 - ↑ understanding of information
 - ↑ quality of life
 - ↓ satisfaction

What is Patient Engagement?

- Often defined as a patient's active participation in their own health, care and treatment [2]
- A recent review concluded on a lack of a clear universally adopted definition [3]

- Sparse data on oncologists' challenges regarding patient - provider communication & patient engagement

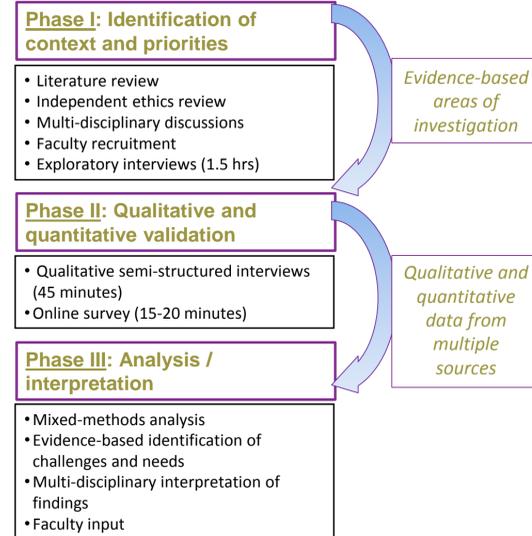
- International needs assessment of oncologists treating and managing patients with colorectal cancer (CRC) conducted in 7 countries



B. Objective

- Study objective was to better understand knowledge and skill issues of oncologists treating and managing patients with CRC
- This poster highlights challenges related specifically to patient-provider communication

C. Methods & Sample



Analysis

- Qualitative data → Thematic coding analysis
- Quantitative data → frequencies, ANOVA
 - Tahmane's T2 post-hoc tests were used to identify differences by country
- Triangulation of qualitative and quantitative findings: ↑ trustworthiness of the findings.

Sample of Oncologists (n:358)

Country	n (%)
China (CHN)	68 (19%)
France (FRA)	44 (12%)
Germany (GER)	44 (12%)
Italy (ITA)	45 (13%)
Spain (SP)	44 (12%)
United Kingdom (UK)	45 (13%)
United States of America (USA)	68 (19%)
Practice Setting	n (%)
Private	68 (19%)
Community-based	72 (20%)
Cancer Center	49 (14%)
Academic	169 (47%)
Years of Practice	n (%)
5-10 years	116 (32%)
11-20 years	175 (49%)
More than 20 years	67 (19%)
Caseload	n (%)
5- 50 patients/year	109 (30%)
50-150 patients/year	146 (41%)
More than 150 patients/year	103 (29%)

D. Findings

10 Substantive Gaps Related to:

1. Interpretation of imaging
2. Mutation analysis & subsequent treatment adaptation
3. Determining precise staging
4. Aggressiveness of treatment
5. Optimal sequencing
- 6. Communicating & engaging patient**
7. Managing side-effects and toxicities
8. Chemoresistance, cross-resistance & combinations
9. Individualizing treatment (patient profile, tumor)
10. Access to treatment

Gap in bold is the focus in this presentation; other gaps have been described in [5]

Engaging the Patient at Diagnosis

*"I can tell you that the moment of the **communicating the diagnosis is the most problematic**. That is where I am putting everything at stake, a wrong communication could invalidate patient's compliance, and a correct communication could nearly guarantee that compliance".*

- Medical Oncologist, Italy

Providers' Skills for Patient Engagement

- **CHN, ITA:** Few see relevance, but those who see relevance seek improvement
- **UK, USA:** Majority see relevance, but do not report needing improvement

	% who see the skill as essential % of those who report needing improvement						
	CHN	GER	SP	FRA	ITA	UK	USA
Engaging patients in shared decision making regarding their disease	35	53	50	35	32	93	78
	76	57	35	43	62	24	23

The relevance of the ability/skill: Not relevant, Somewhat relevant, Essential
Current level of the ability/skill: Needs significant improvement, needs minor improvement, optimal

Engaging the Patient in their Treatment Plan

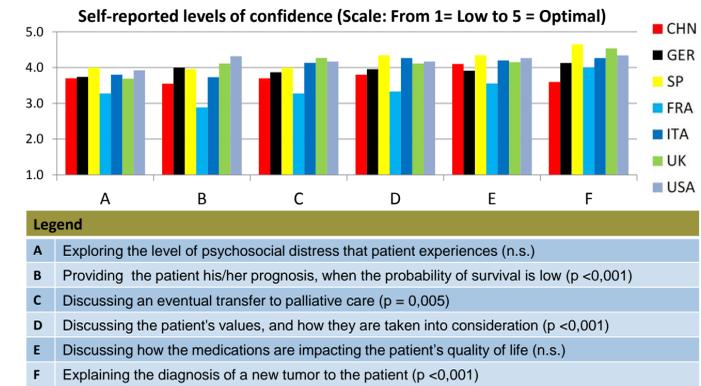
*"The **problem is to communicate it** [the treatment] **to the patients** (...) *If we as doctors say, that's what it says in our guidelines, that's how we do it; they need to agree to it. We actually have to sell it, sell it in the sense of convincing them*".*

- Medical Oncologist, Germany

*"Besides, it's important for patients to accept the modern and scientific treatment. We have to do a lot in this regard. **In fact, sometimes, I spend more time and energy in persuading patients to receive modern and scientific treatment than in actually providing the clinical treatment.**"*

- Medical Oncologist, China

Providers' Confidence for Patient Engagement



Complexity of Patient Engagement & Communication

*"There's immense pressure to get patients seen and put them through and you can't have a conversation with a patient over 10 or 15 minutes (...) (I) **strive to explain things in a clear, concise fashion and give the patient time to absorb the information and ask questions, so there's basically a time pressure**".*

Medical Oncologist, UK

Providers' Skills for Specific Aspects of the Patient-Provider Relationship

	% who see the skill as essential % of those who report needing improvement						
	CHN	GER	SP	FRA	ITA	UK	USA
Addressing issues between patients and their family/caregivers with regard to treatment choice	35	38	45	23	24	71	65
Managing patients' fears and expectations	47	70	65	53	22	83	70
Providing support to patients with psychosocial needs	33	57	65	45	37	63	68
	75	70	54	78	53	77	49

The relevance of the ability/skill: Not relevant, Somewhat relevant, Essential
Current level of the ability/skill: Needs significant improvement, needs minor improvement, optimal

Patient Engagement: an Unperceived Gap?

*"I think the thing is with people, **they probably don't know whether they're a good communicator or not, so I think everybody probably thinks that they are**. Without having feedback on that from patients, I think it's difficult to know whether you are or you're not."*

- Medical Oncologist, UK

E. Discussion

- Study has identified challenges hampering oncologists' communication with patients in 7 countries.
- Important differences between countries in perceived levels of relevance and self-reported skills

Implications for Oncologists

- Study highlights need to reflect on:
 - Own practice and importance of patient-provider communication
 - Impact of their communication on their patients outcomes
 - Impact of their engagement strategies on their patient outcomes
 - Educational and other potential solutions they should seek

Implications for Educators

- Study to inform
 - Design of education initiatives to enhance oncologists' skills in communicating with patients and engaging patients in their diagnosis and treatment plan
 - Adaptation of education initiatives to each country's reality

F. References

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