

THE PERSPECTIVES OF CANCER PATIENTS ON CASE MANAGERS AS ADVANCE CARE PLANNING CONVERSATIONALISTS

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INTRODUCTION

Personalized treatment and symptom management, in which future care options are integrated, are crucial to manage care for patients with advanced cancer, making **Advance Care Planning (ACP)** essential.

If executed timely, ACP has proven to improve quality of life, increase the chance of dying in the preferred location and lower health care costs [1,2].

CASE MANAGER

A **nurse in the outpatient clinic** with special training in how to manage and evaluate all aspects of patient care. They are easily accessible, have an **informal and personal patient approach** and have extensive disease- and treatment specific knowledge.

OBJECTIVE

This study evaluates the perspectives of cancer patients on ACP conversations conducted by **case managers**.

METHODOLOGY

12 semi-structured patient interviews were conducted. An interview guide was used to structure the topics regarding the experience of an ACP conversation by a case manager.

ANALYSIS

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. A thematic iterative analysis approach was executed using ATLAS.ti.

RESULTS

Three main themes were formulated.

Theme 1: The case manager as healthcare professional in ACP conversations.

- Patients expressed confidence in the case manager's expertise regarding ACP and end-of-life care.
- Trust and familiarity enabled patients to engage actively in ACP conversations.
- Patients valued the empathic approach and the time that was taken.

Theme 2: Patients' expectations and needs regarding ACP conversations.

- Patients engage in ACP conversations to feel in control over their own disease trajectory.
- A vast majority of patients had no expectations regarding ACP conversations.

Theme 3: The impact of ACP conversations.

- The conversation relieved (family) burden regarding end-of-life.
- Every patient expressed clarity regarding their wishes.
- ACP conversations resulted in a collective understanding and a decisive plan of action.
- Positive impact on relationship with case manager.

CONCLUSION

Patients experience the **positive impact** of case managers taking on the role of ACP conversationalists. These findings provide valuable insights for healthcare providers seeking to enhance the implementation of case managers in advance care planning.



References:

- [1] Starr, L.T., et al., Associations Among End-of-Life Discussions, Health-Care Utilization, and Costs in Persons With Advanced Cancer: A Systematic Review. *Am J Hosp Palliat Care*, 2019. 36(10): p. 913-926
[2] Mack, J.W., et al., Associations between end-of-life discussion characteristics and care received near death: a prospective cohort study. *J Clin Oncol*, 2012. 30(35): p. 4387-95.