

## Enhancing the Oncology Nurse's Role in MDS Patient Communication and Education Communication Strategies for MDS Patient and Caregiver Education

Leslie Pettiford, RN, MS, CCRC  
UF Health Cancer Center  
Clinical Trials Office  
Malignant Hematology Division



## Objectives

- Define patient-centered communication
- Describe how effective communication is a process between the clinician and patient/family that occurs during individual interactions
- Describe how effective communication can facilitate improved communication and healthcare outcomes



## Communication in the Cancer Setting

- Receive bad news
- Understand complex information
- Communicate with health professionals
- Understand statistics related to prognosis
- Deal with uncertainty while maintaining hope
- Build trust
- Make decisions about treatment
- Adopt health-promoting behaviors



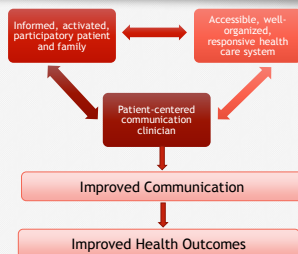
## Patient-Centered Care

- Respect
- Coordination and integration of care
- Physical comfort
- Emotional support
- Involvement of family and friends

Institute of Medicine. Crossing the quality chasm: a new health system for the 21st century. Washington, DC: National Academies Press; 2001.



## Patient-Centered Care



Epstein RM, Street RL, Jr. Patient-Centered Communication in Cancer Care: Promoting Healing and Reducing Suffering. National Cancer Institute, NIH Publication No. 07-6225. Bethesda, MD, 2007.



## Patient-Centered Communication

- Communicating effectively is the cornerstone of quality health care
- Eliciting, understanding, and validating the patient's and family's perspective
- Understanding the patient in his/her own context
- Reaching an understanding of the patient's problem and treatment
- Offering the patient involvement in choices relating to health care
- Understanding = increased likelihood to understand options, modify behavior, and adhere to instructions

Patient-Centered Care Guide. (n.d.). March 31, 2015, from <http://www.patient-centeredcare.org/inside/practical.html#common>



## Motivation

### Health Care Providers

- Motivated to provide high-quality care
- Can be compromised
  - ❖ Rushing through a consultation
  - ❖ Avoiding topics
- Not only the transfer of information but also the key to forming relationships



## Motivation

### Patients

- Talk openly and honestly
- Deliberately avoid topics
  - ❖ embarrassing or uncomfortable
  - ❖ fear of disapproval
  - ❖ believe is not pertinent to the interaction



## Knowledge

### Health Care Providers

- Patient's Perspective
  - ❖ Challenging to have an accurate understanding
  - ❖ Aids the provider
  - ❖ Misunderstanding contributes to bias
- Understanding of the MDS diagnosis
- Educational Tools



## Knowledge

### Patients

- Health literacy
- Understanding of health
- Minimal understanding of health concepts and terminology
- Decision-making and informed consent
- Patient education



## Skill - Health Care Providers

### Non-verbal Behaviors

- Maintaining eye contact
- Forward lean to indicate attentiveness
- Nodding to indicate understanding
- Absence of distracting movements (fidgeting, checking time)

### Verbal Behaviors

- Avoiding interruptions
- Establishing purpose of visit
- Encouraging participation
- Soliciting the patient
- Eliciting and validating the patient's emotions
- Asking family and social context
- Providing sufficient information
- Checking for patient understanding
- Offering reassurance, encouragement and support



## Skill - Patients

### Active Communication Behaviors

- Asking questions
- Communicating assertively
- Expressing concerns and feelings
- Telling health "story" in the context of everyday life

### Passive Communication Behaviors

- May put health outcomes at risk
- Will not satisfy the patient's need to feel known, understood or heard
- Will not satisfy the clinician's obligation to address the patient's concerns in order to maximize healing



## How does this relate to patients with MDS?

- 2014 AA&MDSIF Survey Results: Disparities in Perceptions of MDS Understanding Between Patients and Nurses
- Challenges to patient and family satisfaction
- Patient-Centered approach
- Improvement of satisfaction, overall care, and outcomes for patients with MDS



## QUESTION 1

Which of the following is not a characteristic of patient-centered communication?

- Validating patient's concerns
- Understanding the patient within his or her own psychological and social context
- Rushing through an encounter with a patient to get the clinic back on schedule
- Encouraging patient and family participation in health care decisions



## QUESTION 1

Which of the following is not a characteristic of patient-centered communication?

- Rushing through an encounter with a patient to get the clinic back on schedule



## Aligning Perspectives

- Communication is an outcome
- Alignment of perspectives
  - ❖ Mutual influence
  - ❖ Common goals
  - ❖ Adaptations



## Mutual Influence

- Joint construction of clinical encounter
- Active communication behaviors
- Introduce topics
- Facilitate better communication



## Shared Goals

- Goals
  - ❖ Expectations
  - ❖ Preferences
  - ❖ Perceived purpose
- Specific and explicit
  - ❖ Early in the visit
  - ❖ Satisfaction
  - ❖ Adherence



## Adaptation

- Key to effective patient-centered communication
- Presenting information in a manner that the patient understands
- Rephrasing or restating information
- Periodically checking patient and family understanding
- Errors and misinterpretations
- Conversation repair



## QUESTION 2

Which of the following is an example of an effective communication technique?

- a) Maintaining eye contact and nodding to indicate understanding
- b) Interrupting the patient while he is telling you about his concerns
- c) Avoiding difficult questions and answers
- d) Reading the next patient's chart during the encounter



## QUESTION 2

Which of the following is an example of an effective communication technique?

- a) **Maintaining eye contact and nodding to indicate understanding**



## Outcomes of Effective Communication

- Direct or indirect contributions
- Positive Outcomes
  - ❖ Quality of the encounter
  - ❖ Patient outcomes
  - ❖ Health outcomes



## Quality of the Encounter

- Patient's viewpoint
  - ❖ Feeling understood
  - ❖ Actively participating
  - ❖ Improved understanding
  - ❖ Getting help
  - ❖ Establishing trust
- Provider's viewpoint
  - ❖ Satisfaction
  - ❖ Understanding of the patient's perspective
  - ❖ Provided high-quality health care
  - ❖ Rapport with the patient



## Patient Outcomes

- Strong therapeutic alliances
- Patient knowledge and understanding
- Emotional self-management
- High-quality medical decisions
- Family/social support and advocacy
- Patient self-efficacy, empowerment, and enablement
- Improved adherence, health habits, and self-care
- Access to care and effective use of the health care system





## Health Outcomes

- Primary
- Improved survival
- Improved health-related quality of life
- Improved emotional well-being and psychological symptoms
- Greater satisfaction and decreased emotional distress



## Importance of Context

- Disease factors (e.g., type of cancer, stage of disease)
- Family and social environment
- Cultural context
- Media environments (e.g., coverage of health topics, access to information)
- Health care system
- Societal factors (e.g., laws, socioeconomic status)



## QUESTION 3

Mrs. R mentioned to her nurse that she is worried that her new medicine for her diagnosis of MDS is not working since she has been feeling more tired since she started taking it. Which of the following statements would be the most appropriate to validate her feelings?

- "You should just start taking your pill before you go to bed."
- "Uh-huh. Let's take your blood pressure, the doctor will be in shortly."
- "What medicine are you taking? Maybe you need your blood counts checked."
- "This is making you worried. It is common for many patients to feel more tired when they first start taking medication for the treatment of MDS. Let me get you a patient educational guide about this treatment and how to manage the side effects."



## QUESTION 3

Mrs. R mentioned to her nurse that she is worried that her new medicine for her diagnosis of MDS is not working since she has been feeling more tired since she started taking it. Which of the following statements would be the most appropriate to validate her feelings?

- "This is making you worried. It is common for many patients to feel more tired when they first start taking medication for the treatment of MDS. Let me get you a patient educational guide about this treatment and how to manage the side effects."



## Resources

- Institute of Medicine. Crossing the quality chasm: a new health system for the 21st century. Washington, DC: National Academies Press; 2001.
- Epstein RM, Street RL, Jr. Patient-Centered Communication in Cancer Care: Promoting Healing and Reducing Suffering. National Cancer Institute, NIH Publication No. 07-6225. Bethesda, MD, 2007.
- Patient-Centered Care Guide. (n.d.). March 31, 2015, from <http://www.patient-centeredcare.org/inside/practical.html#common>
- Patients And Physicians Have Different Perceptions Of Myelodysplastic Syndromes - The MDS Beacon. (n.d.). Retrieved March 31, 2015, from <http://www.mdsbeacon.com/news/2014/04/02/patient-physician-perceptions-myelodysplastic-syndromes/>



## Acknowledgements

### UF Health Cancer Center

Hematology Oncology Division  
 John Wingard, MD  
 W.S. May, MD, PhD  
 Jan Moreb, MD  
 John Hiemenz, MD  
 Randall Brown, MD  
 Chris Gogle, MD  
 Jack Hsu, MD  
 Maxim Norkin, MD, PhD

### AA&MDS International Foundation Patients and Families

Thank You!

Leslie Pettiford, RN, MS, CCRC  
 lpettiford@ufl.edu