

CLINICIAN'S PERCEPTION OF THE RELATION WITH PROSTATE CANCER PATIENTS IN MULTIDISCIPLINARY VERSUS ONE ON ONE SETTING

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Existing literature emphasized a multidisciplinary approach could be suitable for dealing with complex issues faced by physicians in managing prostate cancer (Valdagni et al, 2005; Fitzpatrick et al, 2008; Gommella et al., 2010).

The aim of our study was to evaluate clinicians' perception of patient-clinician relationship in a multidisciplinary context, and to compare this with physicians' perceptions of providing care in a one-on-one setting.

A qualitative observational study was performed in 2009 at the Prostate Program where multidisciplinary clinic (MDC) is active since 2005. Three radiation oncologists, three urologists, three medical oncologists and one psychologist from the multidisciplinary team were interviewed.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. A content analysis was performed using paper-and-pencil methodology. Transcripts were coded line-by-line and significant "units of meaning" (most recurrent phrases or words) were identified.

According to clinicians, MDC's advantages are: (a) providing patients with more accurate information and (b) acquiring significant information from patients. Nonetheless, a clear preference for a multidisciplinary setting did not emerge. Clinicians reported they perceived advantages also in one-on-one examinations, specifically because: (a) they feel more comfortable listening to the patient and more able to manage communication and, (b) the process of building trust is easier.

Clinicians appear to recognize the value of MDC in terms of effective communication with patients, but feel that other aspects of relationship building are hindered in a multidisciplinary setting. Organizational and teamwork issues should be addressed in order to optimize MDC.

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