



Healthcare Communication and Support After an Emergency Department Diagnosis of Gastrointestinal (GI) Cancer

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DESCRIPTION

Gastrointestinal (GI) cancers, including cancers of the esophagus, stomach, liver, pancreas, colon, and rectum, represent a significant health burden globally. These cancers often have a late onset of symptoms, leading some patients to receive their initial diagnosis in the Emergency Department (ED). An ED diagnosis of GI cancer can be a traumatic and significant event for patients, prompting a several physical, emotional, and psychological responses. This qualitative analysis searches into patients' experiences following an ED diagnosis of GI cancer, aiming to focus on their emotional journey, coping mechanisms, and perceptions of healthcare communication and support. Receiving a GI cancer diagnosis in the ED often comes as a shock to patients who arrived with symptoms they may have believed to be less severe.

Since the ED is generally connected to acute illnesses and injuries rather than the confirmation of a life-threatening condition, many people experience mental states of indifference. Uncertainty and fear are typical psychological responses. Patients struggle with the unknown aspects of their diagnosis, such as the stage of cancer, treatment options, and prognosis. Patients and their families are left in a state of psychological trauma as a result of these impulses being amplified by the suddenness of the diagnosis. The anxiety and depression that often follow an ED diagnosis of GI cancer can be weakening. Patients are concerned about their prospects, the influence on their families, and the mental and physical impact of therapy. Some patients require immediate psychological support to manage their distress. Many patients turn to their family and friends for emotional support. An effective care community support system is critical during this challenging time, as it provides a sense of security and helps patients navigate the emotional situation. To regain a sense of control, some patients engage in extensive research about their diagnosis, treatment options, and healthcare providers.

Information-seeking helps them better understand their condition and participate in decision-making.

Support groups and peer counseling services become valuable resources for patients. Sharing experiences with others facing similar challenges can reduce feelings of isolation and offer practical advice on managing symptoms and side effects. Patients often express dissatisfaction with the timing and delivery of their diagnosis in the ED. Effective communication from healthcare providers is essential. Patients appreciate clear and accessible information about their diagnosis, treatment options, and potential side effects. The use of layman's terms and visual aids can enhance understanding. Patients value healthcare providers who demonstrate empathy and compassion.

Their experience generally and need to participate in therapy can be greatly influenced by support and recognition of their psychological discomfort. Patients often encounter challenges in navigating the healthcare system, including coordinating appointments with various specialists, obtaining referrals, and managing insurance and financial aspects of care. The burden of these logistics can add to their stress. Access to specialized cancer care and treatments can be a concern, especially for those diagnosed in the ED. Patients may encounter delays in receiving appropriate care, which can impact treatment outcomes. Patients frequently express the need for long-term follow-up care to monitor their cancer status and address ongoing issues related to treatment side effects, emotional well-being, and survivorship.

CONCLUSION

An ED diagnosis of GI cancer is a significant event that obtains a range of emotional responses and challenges for patients. Understanding the experiences of these individuals is essential for healthcare providers to provide effective support and care. Patients' emotional needs, coping mechanisms, and perceptions of healthcare communication and support play a critical role in their overall well-being and treatment adherence. Improving the

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patient experience following an ED diagnosis of GI cancer requires a multidisciplinary approach, including enhanced communication, psychological support, and efficient navigation of the healthcare system. By addressing these aspects, healthcare

providers can help patients on their approach toward cancer treatment and survivorship while mitigating the emotional toll of their diagnosis.