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Privacy-solidarity conflict: the communication with the support group.

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Abstract

Actually guidelines require that patient must be informed about his condition so that he can choose the persons he wants to share these information with. Nonetheless, the caregiver usually gets an intermediary role in doctor-patient communication thus becoming the doctor's main conversation partner and claiming to be given more information than the patient himself. A more complex situation is about brain tumours patients sometimes affected by cognitive deficiencies, compromising their comprehension skills or their capability of keeping the information they are being given. A preliminary study allowed to submit separately to brain tumour patients and their family members a semi-structured interview. Although doctors communicate diagnosis and therapeutic plans, patients and their family members often do not seem to remember the information they are given. An important percentage of patients and their carers cannot tell correctly what they was said by the doctors. Only a minor percentage of patients do not want to know all details of their disease. Instead, most of the family members, would rather their beloved were given just partial information on their conditions or even not given information at all. Communication with patients and their carers requires careful re-negotiation in a multiple time-points, rather than a one-off communication episode.

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