Does an Advance Care Planning Video Help Patients Having Surgery for Cancer Discuss Their Healthcare Preferences with Their Surgeons?

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What was the research about?

In advance care planning, people make decisions about their preferences for medical care they would want to receive if they become unable to speak for themselves. For example, a person might decide ahead of time that they would be willing to use a feeding tube. People may also name someone to make medical decisions for them if needed.

In this study, the research team made a video on advance care planning. The team wanted to learn if the video changed discussions between patients and their surgeons before major cancer surgery. The study compared the effects of the video on advance care planning with a general video about the hospital where patients were having surgery.

What were the results?

Patients who saw the video on advance care planning didn't talk with their surgeon about advance care planning more than patients who didn't see the video. Also, those who saw the video on advance care planning were more likely to say that it was helpful than patients who saw the general video about the hospital.

Who was in the study?

The study included 92 patients. All patients were undergoing major surgery to treat cancer. The most common type of cancer among the patients was

pancreatic cancer (32 percent). Among all patients in the study, 85 percent were white and 11 percent were African American. The average age of patients was 60, and 63 percent of patients were women.

What did the research team do?

The research team assigned patients by chance to watch either the video on advance care planning or the general video. Patients watched their assigned video when they joined the study.

The video on advance care planning featured patients, caregivers, and doctors. It included information on

- The surgery and what to expect on the day of surgery
- Why advance care planning is important
- Naming a person to make decisions when a patient can't speak for themselves

The general video described the hospital and its surgery program. But it didn't talk about advance care planning.

After patients watched the assigned video, the team recorded the discussions between patients and surgeons. The team listened to see if patients talked about advance care planning with their surgeons. The

team also listened to see if patients named someone to make health decisions for them.

Patients filled out surveys four times: before watching the video, before surgery, and then one week and one month after surgery. The surveys asked if the patient had named someone who could make decisions for them if needed and if the patient found the video to be helpful.

When designing the video and during the study, the research team worked with patients, caregivers, doctors, nurses, and experts in advance care planning.

What were the limits of the study?

All surgeons in the study saw the video on advance care planning. As a result, the surgeons may have changed how they talked with all patients in the study.

Future research could look at other ways to encourage patients and surgeons to discuss advance care planning.

How can people use the results?

Even though the video didn't affect what patients and surgeons talked about, patients still found the video to be helpful. Hospitals may consider using similar videos when discussing advance care planning with patients.

To learn more about this project, visit pcori.org/Aslakson084.