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Patients-family communication about end-of-life care wishes in Korea

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Statement of the Problem: End-of-life care communication is important in cancer care. Having patients' wishes on end-of-life care set out in advance can ensure their wishes are honored at the end of life. However, little is known about how many Korean patients with terminal cancer share their wishes with family and what influences on their communication. The purpose of the study was to investigate the prevalence of patient-family communication about end-of-life cancer care wishes in Korea and the factors influencing end-of-life communication.

Methodology: In this cross-sectional study, data were collected from 102 family members who had participated in end-of-life cancer decision making at a university hospital in South Korea.

Findings: The results indicated that 32.4% of the participants answered that they knew about patients' wishes on end-of-life care. Logistic multiple regression analyses demonstrated that patients' functional status and family functioning had significant influences on patient-family communication about end-of-life care. Patients with better functional status and better family functioning were more likely to share end-of-life wishes with family. However, patients' age, gender, income, and education had no significant influence on end-of-life communication.

Conclusion: Facilitation of patient-family communication on end-of-life cancer care necessitates consideration of patient's functional status and family functioning.

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