

## Review Article

# Prognostic Disclosure and its Influence on Cancer Patients

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### Abstract.

**Background:** Prognostic disclosure is a show of respect for patient autonomy. Only patients who are aware of their prognosis can participate in discussions about their medical condition and make decisions that meet their individual preferences. Despite the abundant literature on this topic, no systematic estimates of prognostic disclosure in cancer patients are available and relatively little research has focused on the impact of prognostic awareness and disclosure on cancer patients.

**Methods:** The literature on prognostic awareness and disclosure in cancer patients was systematically reviewed and subjected to a meta-analysis.

**Results:** The literature search retrieved 25 articles for meta-analysis. The pooled proportion of preferences for prognostic information and prognostic disclosure was calculated. Most cancer patients expressed a preference for prognostic disclosure [84.6%, 95% confidence interval (CI) 74.1%-91.4%], but only about half were told their prognosis (49.3%, 95% CI 36.4%- 62.3%). These results indicate a gap between cancer patients' preferences for prognostic disclosure and their actual receipt of prognosis. Cancer patients who are not told their prognosis may have several negative consequences, including inappropriate prognostic awareness, receiving futile treatment at the end of life, being unprepared for death, increased psychological and mental distress as well as social and spiritual suffering, and decreased quality of life. The discrepancy between patients' preferred and actual prognostic disclosure is primarily due to physicians' difficulty in revealing the prognosis; this difficulty stems from inaccurate estimates of prognosis, attitudes of beneficence and maintaining patients' hope, lack of good communication skills, and not knowing patients' preferences for prognostic information.

**Conclusions:** In order to close the gap between patients' preferences for prognostic disclosure and actual receipt of prognostic information, healthcare professionals should develop interventions to overcome the physicians' difficulty in revealing prognosis, thus facilitating cancer patients' awareness of prognosis and providing high quality end-of-life care.

**Keywords :** prognostic disclosure, prognostic awareness, cancer

## 綜合評論

### 癌症病人預後告知的現況及其影響的探討

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### 中文摘要

**背景：**告知疾病預後是對病人自主權的尊重，惟有病人知道自己的疾病預後，才能主動參與病情討論、做出最符合個人意願及利益的抉擇。然而目前極少研究以統合分析方式指出預後告知的比例及描述預後告知對癌症病人的影響。

**研究方法：**本研究以系統性回顧方式，搜尋癌症病人預後認知相關文獻，並運用統合分析計算預後訊息喜好及預後告知的比例。

**結果：**統合 25 篇與癌症病人預後訊息喜好及預後告知相關研究，結果顯示大多數的癌症病人表示希望獲得自己病情相關的訊息[84.6%, 95%信賴區間(CI) 74.1%-91.4%])，但僅半數的癌症病人實際由醫師告知疾病預後(49.3%, 95% CI 36.4%- 62.3%)。當癌症病人希望得知疾病預後而未被告知時，可能對病人造成的影響包括：不當的預後認知、不適切的生命終期照顧目標及照顧模式的選擇、無法作死亡的準備、心理及情緒的困擾等多方面影響。然而醫師可能因正確預估預後的困難、為了維持病人的希望感、缺乏溝通技巧及不知道病人對預後訊息的喜好等，造成病人期望知道與真實被告知預後之差距。

**結論：**為了縮短病人期望知道與真實被告知預後之差距，醫護人員應採取適當的措施以克服醫師面對預後告知的困境，使癌症末期病人在了解疾病預後下，有機會做出與自己願望一致的臨終決定，接受符合其需求的醫療照顧，以達到改善癌症末期病人照顧品質的目標。

**關鍵字：**預後告知、預後認知、癌症病人

## 癌症病人對預後訊息的喜好

告知疾病預後是對病人自主權的尊重，研究指出病人惟有知道自己的疾病預後，才能主動參與病情討論[1,2]，做出最符合個人意願及利益的抉擇[3,4]，因此病人必須被充分告知疾病的預後。事實上，全球大多數的癌症病人希望能獲得有關疾病預後的訊息（範圍 41.2%-100%，加權平均 84.6%，表一）[1,5-16]。

然而不同文化下，病人對預後訊息呈現不同程度的喜好，在西方社會針對癌症病人對預後訊息喜好的研究，指出大多數的癌症病人希望能充分被告知病情（範圍 59.3-100%，加權平均 86.6%，表一）[1,5-7,9,11,12,14]，其中不同的地理位置的癌症

病人希望獲得預後訊息依高低順序分別為歐洲（範圍 77.3%-100%，加權平均 95.4%）[1,5,6,14]、北美洲（80.3%）[12]、南美洲（範圍 59.3-88.7%，加權平均 77.1%）[9,11]及澳洲（75.29%）[7]。另在澳洲的一項研究，探討癌症末期病人病情、預後、治療相關的六項訊息需求程度，得分中數為 28（滿分為 30 分），顯示病人有極高的訊息需求[17]。

雖然文獻中常被提及東方文化對家庭觀念的強調，往往忽略個人的權利，但在亞洲研究中，大多數癌症病人仍希望能被告知疾病預後（範圍 41.2-96.10%，加權平均 78.2%，表一）[8,10,13,15,16]。在台灣的研究指出癌症病人希望醫師直接將預後的訊息告知自己的程度高於直接告知家屬（平均值±標準差 3.97±0.90 vs. 3.69±0.97,  $p < 0.0001$ ）（1 分為非常不期待至 5 分的非常期待），或優先在家屬之前被告知的程度高於優先在自己之前告知家屬的程度（3.74±0.98 vs. 2.97±0.94,  $p < 0.0001$ ）[18]。

因此無論東西方國家的研究皆指出當疾病惡化、死亡迫近時，大多數癌症病人希望被誠實告知

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