ADHERENCE IN CANCER PATIENTS TAKING ORAL ANTICANCER DRUGS: RESULTS OF A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Agenda

- Background
- Methods
- Results
- Implications for practice
Background

- Increasing use of oral anticancer drugs in modern oncology (Banna et al., 2010)

- Adherence => treatment succes (Ganesan et al., 2011, Ibrahim et al., 2011, Marin et al., 2010)

- Underlying processes of non-adherence and selfmanagement in patients taking oral Tyrosine Kinase Inhibitors (TKI’s) are unclear

- Insight into the mechanisms => crucial to allow adequate counseling for these patients

- To date, little qualitative research has been conducted (Verbrugghe et al., 2013)
Aim

To explore processes underlying (non-)adherence in patients taking oral TKI’s
Methods

- Qualitative research based on the principles of grounded theory
- Semi-structured interviews with 30 patients having different types of cancer and taking oral TKI’s
- Iterative process of data collection and – analysis => data saturation
Results

- Focuses are not absolutely: patients shift over time
- Determined by a set of complex and interrelated influencing factors
- Intensity and quantity of side effects are moderating
Results

(1) Patients having a focus on surviving

- Face the acuteness and life-threatening nature of the disease
- Are usually in the initial phase of the treatment with oral TKI's
- Persevere side effects – low quality of life
- Don’t report side effects
- At risk of toxicity
- Panic when forgetting medication

“The doctor questioned my quality of life because I’m so sick of this medication. She wanted to give me a lower dose: 25mg instead of 37.5mg, but I refused. I’ll persevere. It’s the only option if I want to have a chance. It’s very very hard, but I have to go on, I have to go on. I just don’t have any other choice.”
Results

(2) Patients having a **focus on quality of life**

- Face less the acuteness and life-threatening nature of the disease
- Experiment with their medication to obtain an acceptable quality of life acceptable by building in drug holidays, reducing the dosage on their own, deviating from instructions, etc.
- Mostly inadequate self-management
- Often a lack of knowledge
- Often no relationship based on trust with health care workers

“The doctor said I have to leave 12 hours between the first and second dose. I said that is not possible. Between my breakfast and supper, there are not 12 hours. I often sleep a little bit longer... And then he said try it anyway. But now, sometimes there are only 7 hours between the first and second dose. But he gave those instructions only once at the beginning of the treatment and he never never repeated it.”
Results

(3) Patients in **balance between surviving and quality of life**

- Experience sufficient quality of life
- Make some adjustments based on a good knowledge and in consultation with their physician
- Often have a relationship based on trust with health care workers in which side effects and other problems are reported.
- Are often well informed and managed and have a good knowledge leading them to adequate self-management
Results

Shifts in focus

- Focus on surviving => balance between surviving and quality of life
- Balance between surviving and quality of life => focus on quality of life
- Focus on surviving <=> focus on quality of life

Cease treatment
Results

Influencing factors:

- Anxiety: dose reduction, amount of medication, confrontation with other health problems
- Hope
- Relationship based on trust
- Feedback mechanisms: health care worker, medication, control moments
- Social support
- Information about side effects
- Tools and routine
- Complexity of the treatment
- ...

Implications for practice

- Health care (workers) should create conditions to allow patients to obtain a balance between focus on surviving and focus on quality of life
- Special attention for individual, regular and accessible consultations tailored to the patient
- Hope should not be undermined (unless harmful) => coping mechanism
- Patients should be guided to obtain adequate self-management => insightful knowledge about treatment and how medication works
Questions?
Thank you for your attention!

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