

Good Patient/Physician Communication

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I. Improved Patient Outcomes

1. PC Management

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There are many things that we can do as patients and patient advocates. We are going to talk about how you can do a better job of controlling your own health, and you are the one who is able to gain the most if you take charge of your own prostate cancer management system.

Selection of an outstanding physician is the number one priority. There are a number of studies that show that the effectiveness of the treatment both in quality of life and control of the prostate cancer is highly dependent upon the skill of the physicians. Do your homework and get the best physician that you can.

Effective communication between the patient and his physician is essential, and one of the patient's challenges is to develop skills and techniques for enhanced communication.

2. Quality of Life Issues

Patients must make sure that they understand what the physician is saying, and if you don't understand, you should ask. There must be a significant and detailed discussion between the patient and physician about side effects. Surveys show that physicians and patients rarely discuss incontinence and erectile dysfunction, and these are major quality of life issues. The patient must be well informed before the treatment begins.

II. Patient and Physician Responsibilities

1. Patient Responsibilities

Become an empowered patient, which most doctors prefer. Do your homework, and make sure that you understand the terminology. Another big thing is to prepare for the doctor's visit before you get there. Write your questions down, and bring them with you. Listen intently, and make sure you both understand each other. Seek multiple opinions before you go forward with a procedure or treatment. Select highly skilled doctors. Keep meticulous records, and ask for a copy of test reports. Get permission, and then tape record doctors visits. Finally, take a friend or family member to the doctor visit if possible, and be respectful of the doctor's time.

2. Physician Responsibilities

Physicians need to partner with the patient and invest more time in explaining details. If possible, suggest contact with knowledgeable patient advocates. Physicians should be

compassionate, not pessimistic, and they should encourage multiple opinions. Realistic information should be provided to patients about quality of life issues, and physicians must seek to build hope in their patients.