



## **Article Review**

### **Lack of Concordance between Physician and Patient: Reports on End-of-Life Care Discussions**

*Journal of Palliative Medicine, Vol 10, No 3, November 3, 2007:* Susan Desharnais, Ph. D., M.P.H., Rickey E. Carter, Ph.D., Winnie Hennessy, R.N., M.S.N., Jerome E. Kurent, M.D., M.P.H., and Cindy Carter, Ph.D.

### **Key Points**

- ✓ Studies have found that patients who discuss their end-of-life care preferences with their physicians and family members have less anxiety, feel more involved in the medical decision-making, and perceive their physicians as having a better understanding of their needs.
- ✓ The purpose of this study was to calculate the levels of agreement (concordance) between patients and physicians regarding end-of-life care discussions and to identify the factors influencing the differences.
- ✓ Discussion topics and the patient and physician questions used for the evaluation are found on the next page.
- ✓ Effective concordance is lacking in patient physician communication regarding end-of-life discussions for patients who are terminally ill.
- ✓ There were higher average concordance scores for patients with a higher education.
- ✓ Caucasian physicians had higher concordance scores than African American physicians.
- ✓ Concordance scores were higher for areas regarding the nature of the patient's illness or factual issues, and lower in the areas of patient preferences for end-of-life care, pain management, and financial and religious/spiritual factors influencing their preferences.
- ✓ Other reasons why physicians fail to communicate with patients about end-of-life care options include (1) denial of the patient's approaching death, (2) lack of knowledge of end-of-life community resources, (3) belief that the available end-of-life care options will be unacceptable to the patient, and (4) lack of time for these types of discussions.
- ✓ Hospice can assist physicians and other medical staff with end-of-life care discussions with patients and families to overcome the communication barriers and challenges.

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