

PATIENT PREFERENCES IN THE THERAPY OF MULTIPLE MYELOMA

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OBJECTIVES: Analyses of patients' preferences about their therapies are a prerequisite for shared decision making, but are still not widely performed. This study elaborates the importance of treatment aspects in the eyes of multiple myeloma (MM) patients using direct assessment and Discrete-Choice-Experiments (DCE).

METHODS: After a literature review we conducted focus groups with 6-8 MM patients to collect the most important therapy aspects. Then, patients answered an online or paper-pencil questionnaire which asked for sociodemographic data, self-rated-health (SF12v2 variation) and patients' preferences about therapy. The latter were assessed using direct measurement (16 items, 5-point Likert-scale) as well as DCE (8 pairs with 8 characteristics). The DCE pairs were generated at random. Analyses of variance, influencing factors, random effect probit and logit models for the DCE were performed.

RESULTS: 282 patients responded of which 54% were male: mean age 62 years (SD=10 years), mean duration of the disease five years (SD=3.8 years). Direct measurement revealed efficacy aspects and further treatment options as most important followed by prolonged life expectancy, less side effects, therapy-free-intervals and flexibility. All aspects showed mean values above 50 points (scale 0-100). In the DCE, alternatives which especially contained one or more of the aspects further treatment options, longer life expectancy, "Not-always-think-of-the-disease" and therapy-free-intervals were more frequently selected than others.

CONCLUSIONS: Further treatment options are of major importance to MM patients. In addition, patients value treatment-free-lifetime and emotional quality especially if they are not continuously reminded of the disease. Combining direct measurement of patients preferences with choice based measurements like the DCE ensures eliciting important treatment aspects and avoids ceiling effects and „all-is-very-important“ results.

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