Bereavement Practices of Physicians in Oncology and Palliative Care

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eText: Survey Items

Demographics
1. What is your gender? M/F
2. What is your specialty? RO/MO/PC/Other
3. How many years have you been practicing as a staff physician? ≤ 5 years/5-10 years/11-15 years/> 15 years
4. How old are you?
5. Where do you work? Community hospital/academic hospital/cancer center/other
6. Does your center have a palliative care program? Y/N/Don’t know
7. Does your workplace have a bereavement program? Y/N/Don’t know
8. On average, what is the total number of hours per week that you work? ≤ 40/41-50/51-60/61-70/> 70
9. How many new patients do you see per week? ≤ 5/6-10/11-15/16-20/> 20
10. What percentage of your patients have advanced illness (prognosis under 6 months)? ≤ 25%/> 26%-50%/> 51%-75%/> 75%
11. On average each month, how many patients in your practice die?
12. How much time do you spend on the following activities? (< 25%/> 26%-50%/> 51%-75%/> 75%)
   a. Patient care
   b. Research
   c. Teaching or educational activities
   d. Administration
   e. Other _______________________

Bereavement Practices
1. How often do you perform the following activities after a patient’s death? (never/rarely/sometimes/usually/always)
   a. Telephone call to family
   b. Send a condolence letter or card
   c. Attend a funeral or memorial service
   d. Initiate a meeting with family in person
   e. Attend a meeting with family at their request
   f. Make yourself available to answer telephone calls from patient’s family
   g. Refer to bereavement counselor
   h. Refer to bereavement support program
   i. Refer to bereavement support group

Physician Opinions
2. Please check only 1 box that best reflects your response to each statement below (strongly disagree/disagree/neutral/agree/strongly agree)
   a. I tend to get attached to my patients
   b. I often think about my patients when I am not at work
   c. I prefer not to show my patients how I truly feel
   d. I like to meet my patient’s family members
   e. I tend to treat patients as part of a family unit
   f. Physicians have a responsibility to write a condolence letter
   g. I tend to feel anxious speaking to family members after a patient’s death
   h. I often question my own mortality when my patients die

Barriers to Bereavement Follow-up
3. How important are the following reasons in preventing you from contacting a family member after a patient dies? (not important at all/not important/somewhat important/important/very important)
   a. Lack of time
   b. Lack of bereavement support resources
   c. I have no legal responsibility to do so
   d. I feel uncomfortable about what to say
   e. I feel guilty about the patient’s death
   f. I’m not sure which family member to contact

Bereavement Support Resources
4. In your opinion how important are the following services that a bereavement program might offer? (not important at all/not important/somewhat important/important/very important)
   a. Instructions or teaching about how to write a condolence card/letter
   b. Standardized condolence card or letter
   c. List of bereavement support services available in the community
   d. Identifying the appropriate family member to contact regarding a patient’s death
   e. Facilitate appointment for family with you after a patient’s death