Reviewer’s report

Title: Talking about Treatment Benefits, Harms, and What Matters to Patients in Radiation Oncology: An Observational Study

Version: 0 Date: 08 Sep 2018

Reviewer: Reviewer 2

Reviewer’s report:

PEER REVIEWER COMMENTS: To view the full report from the academic peer reviewer, please see the attached file.

REVIEWER COMMENTS FROM REPORT: Brief summary of the research findings presented in the manuscript

The authors of the current study aimed to evaluate how shared decision-making practices communicating potential harms and benefits and discussing what is important for patients. The authors conclude that radiation oncology clinics should use interprofessional healthcare and implement more discussions about patients' needs and preferences.

Background

The Background section is well-written, supported by several relevant references and clearly states the aim of the study, but it rather short and is recommended to be expanded.

With regard to shared decision-making, the authors may include a very recent publication by Beers et al. as a reference. The study describes the essential steps of shared decision-making, clinical practice guidelines and challenges (Beers et al. The Role of Patients: Shared Decision-Making. Otolaryngol Clin North Am. 2017).

Methods and Results

Methods and Results are described in details. The authors used appropriate methods of statistical analysis.

Discussion

Discussion is supported by the relevant publications, however, there are several references, which might be useful to include in the Discussion.
One important issue, which would be important to emphasize in the Discussion, is informed consent. An article by Berlin L discusses whether informed consent should be obtained from a patient before the patient undergoes a CT or similar examination (Berlin L. Shared decision-making: is it time to obtain informed consent before radiologic examinations utilizing ionizing radiation? Legal and ethical implications. J Am Coll Radiol. 2014).

In addition, a relevant recent paper on shared decision-making has been published by Bieber et al. The study evaluates how a shared decision-making intervention for oncologists affects patients' decision-making roles (Bieber et al. How Does a Shared Decision-Making (SDM) Intervention for Oncologists Affect Participation Style and Preference Matching in Patients with Breast and Colon Cancer? J Cancer Educ. 2018).

Another topic, which might be important for Discussion for this paper, is the importance of physician communication style. In their study, Martinez et al. have suggested that supportive communication by oncologists can improve patients' perceived decision quality (Martinez et al. Does physician communication style impact patient report of decision quality for breast cancer treatment? Patient Educ Couns. 2016).

Also, the question of palliative care would be important to discuss, since 25% of the study patients were on palliative care (Table 1). In particular, Cain et al. has provided suggestions for improving palliative care with cultural perspectives, highlighting the need to have partnerships with patients, their family members, and communities (Cain et al. Culture and Palliative Care: Preferences, Communication, Meaning, and Mutual Decision Making. J Pain Symptom Manage. 2018).

Editorial corrections

Page 4 lines 20-21

Instead of "… principles and practices, including in radiation oncology", it is better to write: "… principles and practices in radiation oncology".

Overall conclusion

The study presented in the manuscript followed the relevant ethical and scientific guidelines. The results of the study would be interesting for oncologists, radiologists and other related healthcare professionals. The authors may add several recent references mentioned in the peer review.

ADDITIONAL REQUESTS/SUGGESTIONS:

The authors are recommended to make several corrections and additions described in the peer review.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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