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Haematological cancer patients are positive towards gene testing

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BACKGROUND

• Precision Medicine has gained increased medical and political attention in recent years.
• In Denmark, this has resulted in The National Strategy for Precision Medicine 2017-2020 and development of a national genome centre.
• In 2016, the Danish Ministry of Health and Danish Regions performed a population-based survey of the public’s perception of Precision Medicine.
• In order to implement Precision Medicine successfully in a clinical setting, it is important to gain knowledge on the perception of Precision Medicine from a patient perspective.
• To our knowledge no study has to date investigated patients’ perception of this subject in a Danish setting.

AIM

• The aim of this study (Pro-Med) was to investigate haematological cancer patients’ perception of Precision Medicine and to compare their perception of Precision Medicine to the healthy population.

METHOD

• Data was collected using a questionnaire developed by ADVICE Communication Agency, Copenhagen for the population-based survey on behalf of the Danish Ministry of Health and Danish Regions.
• The questionnaire contained 12 questions, all focusing on the perception of Precision Medicine.
• Inclusion criteria:
  • Patients included in ProGen/ProSeq - an ongoing prospective Precision Medicine validation study at the Department of Haematology, Aalborg University Hospital (Ethics Committee reg. number: N-20150042 / N-20160089)
  • Outpatients visiting in connection with treatment.
• The questionnaire was administered electronically through REDCap and on paper.
• Data was collected anonymously.

RESULTS

• 295 patients were enrolled between October 2017 and January 2018 (median age; men 66 yrs., women 67 yrs.).
• The study population had a higher median age compared to the public (n=1005) (median age; men 60.5 yrs., women 53 yrs.) and a lower education level.
• 92% of the patients were positive towards genetic research compared to 84% of the public (difference in proportion, p<0.001)
• 84% of the patients had none or limited knowledge about gene testing compared to 55% of the public (difference in proportion, p<0.0001).
• 97% of the patients found gene testing and Precision Medicine interesting compared to 91% of the public (difference in proportion, p<0.002).

CONCLUSIONS

✓ We have identified a higher degree of acceptance towards gene testing and Precision Medicine amongst haematological cancer patients compared to the healthy public.
✓ We have also identified a low self-assessed level of knowledge in this area amongst the same group of patients.
✓ This low level of knowledge should be addressed in order to optimise and support patient dialogue in a Precision Medicine context.