
Realistic Picture Of Dementia: Video Can Help Patients Make End-of-life Decisions

In their report in the British Medical Journal (BMJ), the investigators find that participants who watched such a video in addition to listening to a verbal description of the condition were more likely to indicate they would choose only comfort care if they developed advanced dementia and also said they felt the video was helpful to their decision-making process.

"Decisions at the end of life can be complex and abstract; the video makes it real," says Angelo Volandes, MD, of the MGH Department of Medicine, the study's lead author. "Patients may not have experience with conditions like advanced dementia or the medical interventions involved, other than what they have seen on television or at the movies. Videos of real patients can offer more realistic images."

Asking patients about their preferences for treatment in situations they may face in the future is an essential part of quality care, the authors note; but giving patients a clear understanding of the options they are considering and making sure that messages delivered by different health care providers are consistent can be challenging. Terms that have a specific meaning to medical professionals may be interpreted very differently by the general public.

To give patients a clearer idea of what advanced dementia involves, the research team developed a decision support tool combining a standard verbal description of advanced dementia

Published on : Tue, 2 Jun 2009