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# POSTER ABSTRACTS

## 906.OUTCOMES RESEARCH-MYELOID MALIGNANCIES

# Communicating the Crisis: Navigating the Challenges of Chemotherapeutic Drug Shortages with a Patient-Centered Ethical Dialogue Framework

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**Introduction:** The United States finds itself gripped by debilitating drug shortages, thrusting thousands of patients nationwide into a precarious limbo and making the potential delay or cancellation of essential chemotherapy treatments a reality. In June 2023, the situation escalated to encompass a staggering 309 active drug shortages, including twenty-five chemotherapeutics, two of which are carboplatin and cisplatin. Communicating the nuances of a chemotherapy drug shortage to those affected transforms into a multifaceted and delicate endeavor that demands deep-seated empathy, preparation, and understanding. Mastering strategic, patient-centered communication becomes an ethical imperative and valuable skill for all physicians, amplifying the human connection at the heart of medicine.

Our multidisciplinary team of specialists developed an ethical communication framework to guide physicians in navigating and discussing the complexities of modern drug shortages with patients. This framework promotes empathetic and informative dialogue with patients, empowering them to understand the situation and actively participate in their care decisions. Through this approach, we aim to foster a partnership between physicians and patients, mitigating anxieties and ensuring patients feel heard and supported throughout this trying period.

**Method:** A multidisciplinary team of specialists convened, including physicians, advanced practice providers from hematology and oncology, and bioethicists. We developed an ethical and theoretical communication framework that will prove beneficial for both physicians and patients. Our framework facilitates compassionate and informed exchanges between healthcare professionals and their patients. Special care was given to consider the patient's background, perspectives, and beliefs.

**Results:** The ethical communication framework for addressing chemotherapeutic shortages demonstrated promising potential for enhancing patient-provider interactions during times of crisis. The framework emphasizes open and transparent communication, facilitating patient understanding of the drug shortage situation and empowering patients to participate in their treatment actively.

**Conclusion:** The developed ethical communication framework offers a patient-centered approach to addressing this crisis, aiming to empower patients with knowledge and understanding while fostering a collaborative decision-making process during crisis communication. By prioritizing empathy, transparency, and patient autonomy, the framework serves as a valuable tool for navigating the complexities of drug shortages and mitigating patient fears when discussing the drug shortage crisis. As the framework continues to be integrated into healthcare systems, ongoing evaluation and tracking of patient outcomes will provide valuable insights into its effectiveness and potential areas for improvement in communicating the crisis.

Through strategic and empathetic patient-centered communication, physicians can play a crucial role in supporting patients during the national drug shortage crisis, ensuring that patients' voices are heard and their needs are addressed with compassion and understanding when communicating the crisis.

**Disclosures Locantore-Ford:** Cardinal Health: Consultancy, Honoraria; Accumen: Consultancy, Current Employment, Membership on an entity's Board of Directors or advisory committees.

#### Step 1: Prepare Yourself

- Gather accurate and up-to-date information about the drug shortage, including its cause, expected duration, and any alternative treatment options available.
- Consult with other healthcare professionals or your hospital's pharmacy department to obtain the necessary details.

### Step 2: Start With Empathy and Reassurance

- During the patient's appointment, begin the conversation by expressing empathy for the patient's situation and acknowledging the concern and frustration they may be experiencing.
- Reassure them that you are committed to providing the best possible care, despite the current challenges.

#### Step 3: Explain The Drug Shortage

- Use clear and simple language to explain the specifics of the drug shortage.
- Describe the reasons behind it, such as manufacturing issues, supply chain disruptions, or increased demand.
- Provide an estimated timeline for when the drug supply is expected to normalize, if available.

#### Step 4: Discuss Potential Alternatives

- Share information about any alternative treatment options that may be available.
- Explain the benefits, risks, and potential side effects of these alternatives.

#### Step 5: Address Concerns and Answer Questions

- Encourage the patient to ask questions and address any concerns they may have.
- Be patient, compassionate, and provide honest answers based on the information available to you.
- If you don't have all the answers immediately, assure them that you will follow up with any additional information as soon as possible.

#### Step 6: Collaborate On Decision-Making

- Involve the patient in the decision-making process regarding their treatment options.
- Discuss the pros and cons of each alternative and consider their preferences, overall health status, and treatment goals.
- If necessary, consult with a multidisciplinary team or seek a second opinion to ensure the best course of action

#### Step 7: Provide Ongoing Support

- Emphasize that you and your healthcare team are dedicated to supporting the patient throughout their treatment journey.
- Offer resources such as support groups, counseling services, or patient advocacy organizations that can provide additional assistance and guidance.

#### Step 8: Follow Up

- After the discussion, document the conversation in the patient's medical records and provide them with a written summary of the key points discussed.
- Schedule a follow-up appointment to monitor their progress, address any further questions or concerns, and update them on the status of the drug shortage.

#### Figure 1

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