

## EVALUATION OF THE PATIENT AWARENESS LEVEL OF HIS/HER DISEASE

“Communication is not what is told but what it is understood”, for that reason should never be considered such as something “de facto”, but always a progressive evaluation. Patients confronting live threatening illnesses, even if told about their condition they might not be fully understand the severity of their disease. This does not refer only to the initial diagnosis but it is also an on-going process as their disease progresses. Assessing awareness about the disease is important to establish how the patient is dealing with the situation, his preferences and capacity for decision-making and his further needs for information in order to be involved in his/her care plan. For these discussions to take place patient must be conscious and posses enough cognitive skills to process information and have the required insight to share decision-making.

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1.	Assess patient’s condition ( <i>consciousness, movements, speech, breathing</i> ): <i>preserved vital functions</i> <input type="checkbox"/> ; <i>cardiopulmonary arrest</i> <input type="checkbox"/> (if so, proceed to cardiorespiratory protocol)	0 2 5
2.	Introduce yourself to the patient <b>Hello, I am doctor... and she is my colleague, nurse ... . And you are?</b> Let the patient tell his name. <i>Avoid expressions such as "Are you Mr. Smith" could generate a false confirmation through an automated false answer of "yes" that could come from a patient distracted by his symptoms from the discussion he undertake with the medical staff.</i>	ESSENTIAL
3.	Ensure a private and safe environment for discussion ( <i>room with one bed, curtains, paravans etc.</i> ) Use emphatic communication - refer to the procedure of active listening and emphatic communication.	0 1 3
4.	Evaluate patient speaking abilities ( <i>in case of weakness or difficult respiration associated with the effort of speaking, reduce as much possible patient speaking effort by us speaking instead of him and asking him just to confirm if we have correctly understood it</i> )	0 1 3
5.	Assess patient cognitive skills <b>Can you tell me what day is today? What time is it? Where are we?</b> ( <i>Patient’s cognitive skills evaluation is relevant in order to understand if patient has the adequate orientation related to time, space and self-perception. These aspects are relevant to assess patient’s capacity and its awareness about the consequences of it’s clinical circumstances and decision-making process</i> )	0 2 5
6.	Assess patient skills to make a decision <b>Please, can you tell me what do you understand about your disease?</b> ( <i>If a person can explain what is happening than his/her understanding and memory are sufficiently maintained to make a decision</i> )	0 2 5
7.	Assess patient attitudes <b>Among your available therapeutic alternatives are there one you prefer?</b> ( <i>It’s mean to assess patient’s insight and the understanding of his/her clinical circumstances, to balance risk and benefits, and to evaluate treatment consequences in order to make a decision</i> )	0 2 5
8.	<b>For your actual medical condition have you been seen by other specialists? What have they told you about your disease?</b>	0 1 3
9.	<b>Please, write here your diagnostic using your own words.</b>	0 1 3

10.	<b>Do you think you need more information in order to better understand your diagnostic? I am willing to provide you the necessary information.</b> - refer to the procedure for communicating the diagnosis of severe illness (bad news).				0 1 3
11.	<b>What do you understand on how your medical condition will evolve?</b>				0 1 3
12.	<b>In the last three days which from your actual complains do you consider to be associated with the diagnostic you wrote about?</b>				0 1 3
13.	<b>Are you concerned on or do you have fears regarding possible evolution related on your disease diagnostic?</b>				0 1 3
14.	Fill out the patient's medical record with all the details related to the realisation of the procedure, accidents, complications - as the case may be, date and time.	<b>ESSENTIAL</b>			
15.	All steps must be taken for the patient's safety ( <i>adjust the bed at an inferior height level and lift the lateral limiters</i> ). Make sure the patient can easily reach personal objects ( <i>e.g. mobile phone, book, crossword puzzle etc.</i> ), the glass of water and the remote control for calling medical help. Give details about the medical schedule to follow and the time when the patient will be re-examined).				0 3 6
<b>Total score: 50</b>		<input type="radio"/>			%
		<input type="radio"/>			%
		<input type="radio"/>			%

Legend:  - unfulfilled criterion;  – partially fulfilled criterion;  – completely fulfilled criterion

(score according to column P)

### Selective references

1. Berman Audrey, Synder Shirlee, Jackson Chistina – Skills in clinical nursing, 6-th ed., Pearson Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 2009
2. Baek SK, Kim S, at al. Effect of advanced cancer patient's awareness of disease status on treatment decisional conflict and satisfaction during palliative chemotherapy: a Korean perspective cohort study. Support Care Cancer 2012; 20:1309-1316
3. Tang ST, Liu T, et al. Physician-patient end-of-life care discussion: correlates and associations with end-of-life care preferences of cancer patients- a cross-sectional survey study. Palliative Medicine 2014; 28(10): 1222-1230.
4. Scott Finlayson C, Chen YT, Fu MR. The impact of patients' awareness of disease status on treatment preferences and quality of life among patients with metastatic cancer: a systematic review from 1997-2014. Palliative Care Review 2014;17(10): 1-11.
5. Wallace CL. Family communication and decision making at the end of life: a literature review. Palliative and Supportive Care 2015; 13:815-825