

# Communication training helps oncologists break bad news

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(HealthDay)—A communication skills training (CST) program based on patient preferences regarding communication can help oncologists' communication performance, according to a study published online June 9 in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

Maiko Fujimori, Ph.D., from the National Cancer Center Hospital East in Kashiwa, Japan, and colleagues randomized 30 oncologists to either an [intervention group](#) (IG; two-day CST workshop) or a [control group](#) (CG). At baseline and at follow-up, participants were assessed on their communication performance during simulated consultation and their confidence in communicating with patients. A total of 1,192 patients who had consultations with the participating oncologists were assessed regarding their distress, satisfaction with the consultation, and trust in

their oncologist after the consultation at baseline and/or follow-up.

The researchers found that, compared with the CG, the IG performance scores improved significantly at the follow-up survey, in terms of their emotional support ( $P = 0.011$ ), setting up a supportive environment ( $P = 0.002$ ), and ability to deliver information ( $P = 0.001$ ). In terms of their confidence in themselves, IG oncologists also scored higher at follow-up ( $P = 0.001$ ). Patients meeting with oncologists in the IG were significantly less depressed than those meeting with oncologists in the CG ( $P = 0.027$ ). CST had no effect on patient satisfaction with [oncologists'](#) style of communication.

"Oncologists should consider CST as an approach to enhancing their communication skills," write the authors.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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