

Doctor communication style key during bad-news encounters

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(HealthDay)—Enhanced patient-centered communication (E-PCC)

positively impacts patients' psychological state during bad-news encounters, according to a study published online April 5 in *Cancer*.

Jelena Zwingmann, from Heidelberg University Hospital in Germany, and colleagues conducted a prospective, experimental study to examine the impact of physician communication style during a bad-news encounter. The authors randomized 98 patients with [cancer](#) and 92 patients without cancer to view a video of a clinician delivering a first cancer diagnosis with an E-PCC style or a low patient-centered communication (L-PCC) style.

The researchers observed a substantial increase in state anxiety and negative affect for all participants viewing the disclosure of a [cancer diagnosis](#). Physician communication style moderated this emotional response. Significantly less anxiety was reported by participants viewing an oncologist displaying an E-PCC style versus those watching an oncologist displaying an L-PCC style; they also reported significantly higher trust in the physician.

"Under a threatening, anxiety-provoking disclosure of bad news, a short sequence of empathic PCC influences subjects' [psychological state](#), insofar that they report feeling less anxious and more trustful of the oncologist," the authors write. "Video exposure appears to be a valuable method for investigating the impact of a physician's [communication style](#) during critical encounters."

More information: [Abstract](#)
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