

Blood cancer patients least likely to understand their diagnosis

August 20 2018



Credit: public domain

People with blood cancer are less likely to understand their diagnosis than those with any other type of cancer, according to a new analysis by Bloodwise.

The analysis, based on NHS England's National Cancer Patient

Experience Survey, found that just 59 per cent of blood cancer patients, including those with leukaemia, lymphoma and myeloma, say they completely understood their doctor's explanation of what was wrong with them.

This is much lower than the 73 per cent average for cancer patients who say they fully understood their diagnosis. And one in 25 people (four per cent) diagnosed with blood cancer left not understanding their diagnosis at all. This is higher than for any other type of cancer

Over 40,000 people are diagnosed with a blood cancer every year in the UK. Blood cancer is the fifth most common type of cancer and the third biggest cause of cancer death in the UK. Bloodwise says that if patients have a poor understanding of what is wrong with them, it can lead to a sense of isolation and have a negative impact on their treatment.

Skin cancer patients were most likely to understand their diagnosis, with 80 per cent completely understanding the explanation they were given.

Sarah Porch, Head of Information and Support Services at Bloodwise, said: "Being told that you have cancer can be one of the most devastating experiences of a person's life, and it is vital that people understand what they are being told. If people do not understand their diagnosis, then they are not in a position to ask informed questions about their condition or to explain their disease to their loved ones.

"This is why it is deeply worrying that only six out of 10 people with [blood cancer](#) come away from their [diagnosis](#) fully understanding what is wrong with them.

"Blood cancer is a complicated disease that is less understood than some of the other common types of cancer. So it's important to look at ways to improve how this information is explained to make it as understandable

as possible, as well as making sure that everyone is also offered written information about their cancer."

The analysis was of data from the National Cancer Patient Experience Survey, which saw 69,000 people treated for cancer in England responding to the questionnaire in 2017.

More information: The 2017 Cancer Patient Experience Survey is available here: www.ncpes.co.uk/

Provided by Bloodwise

Citation: Blood cancer patients least likely to understand their diagnosis (2018, August 20)
retrieved 23 April 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-08-blood-cancer-patients-diagnosis.html>

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