Disclosure of cancer diagnosis: what Iranian patients do prefer?

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Background
Doctors in Iran traditionally prefer to discuss the diagnosis of cancer with family members instead of patients. They are concerned about the psychological impacts of diagnostic disclosure. So it becomes an ethically controversial issue in doctor patient relationship which is practiced differently in various cultures and countries. The aim of this cross sectional descriptive study was to evaluate the amount of information that Iranian patients have and their preference for the disclosure of the cancer diagnosis.

Materials and methods
126 patients admitted for chemotherapy in three different sites were questioned about their knowledge of the diagnosis. Two different structured questionnaires were designed for the people who know and who didn’t know their diagnosis. For the former, the survey concerned their psychological reactions to their situations, whether they would prefer to know about their diagnosis. For the latter, the questionnaire included their preference whether and how to know the diagnosis.

Results
60.31% of the patients knew their diagnosis and 39.68% didn’t know. Among the subjects who didn’t know their diagnosis, 88% preferred to be more informed about their diagnosis and 68% had some psychological reaction to their situations in spite of their lack of knowledge. Among the subjects who knew their diagnosis, 73.68% preferred to know their diagnosis, 92.1 % preferred to be informed directly by their physicians.

Conclusions
The majority of Iranian patients with malignancy want to know the truth and they prefer to be informed directly by their doctors.

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References