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### Cancer education in paediatrics oncology: breaking bad news. The parents' assessment of the process.

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**Objective:** Disclosing unfavourable information as a part of cancer patients education is an exceptionally challenging process. The *SPIKES* protocol is one of the most popular guidelines for breaking bad news. The aim of this study was to assess the level of *SPIKES* protocol implementation during first cancer disclosure by paediatric oncologists.

**Methods:** An anonymous survey was conducted among parents of children diagnosed with malignant neoplasm. The tool was the questionnaire considering the *SPIKES* protocol realisation by the doctor while the diagnosis was disclosed. 181 questionnaires were collected and statistically analysed.

**Results:** The *Perception* and *Invitation* parts in the two-thirds of cases were insufficiently implemented, whereas remaining steps were fulfilled in a quite satisfactory manner. The parents' education level, as well as the age of children, were correlated with the Subjective Interview Rate, the assessment of privacy and doctor's language understandability. The women assessed a comprehension of language higher than men ( $p=0.02$ ).

Four independent predictors of satisfaction with knowledge about the disease and its further management have been revealed: an understandability of doctor's language (OR 1.77), an assessment of efficient amount of dedicated time (OR 2.1) emotional support assessed by a patient as optimal (OR 2.42) and a sense of understanding from a physician (OR 2.15).

The independent predictors of higher Subjective Interview Rate were established as the number of parents' years of study ( $\beta -0.15$ ), sitting down with parents ( $\beta 0.39$ ), an invitation for both parents to the interview ( $\beta 0.28$ ) and an assessment of how much information parents want to be given ( $\beta 0.14$ ).

**Conclusions:** The assessment of an interview was quite satisfactory, but still left room for improvement. *Perception* and *Invitation* are the steps which require the most attention. The *SPIKES* protocol is a useful tool also for paediatric oncologists, as a compliance with these guidelines improved general assessment of the disclosure.

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