



A study about communication skills training in oncology*

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* Official title:

On-site Supportive Communication Training in doctor-patient communication: A randomized, controlled trial

Effects of On-site Supportive Communication Training (On-site SCT) on doctor-patient communication in oncology: Study protocol of a randomized controlled trial

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1 Background

The quality of communication in oncology significantly impacts patients' health outcomes, as poor communication increases the risk of unnecessary treatment, inadequate pain relief, higher anxiety levels, and acute hospitalizations.

Additionally, insufficient communication skills training (CST) is associated with stress, low job satisfaction, and burnout among doctors working in oncology.



Figure 1. From challenge to perspectives. CST: Communication skills training

2 Research gap and aim

Research gap
While acknowledging the importance of effective communication, the specific features of successful CST remain uncertain.

Aim
Our aim is to bridge the gap by proposing a novel approach: *On-site Supportive Communication Training (On-site SCT)*.

3 Setting and method

This randomized multicenter trial was conducted at three departments of oncology in Denmark during the fall/winter of 2023/2024.

Eighty-nine doctors were randomized 1:1 into intervention and control groups. The intervention group participated in three full days of on-site SCT, facilitated by trained psychologists. The control group maintained standard practice.

4 The intervention

On-site SCT integrates knowledge from previous studies but is the first randomized controlled trial to employ real-time doctor-patient interactions during CST.

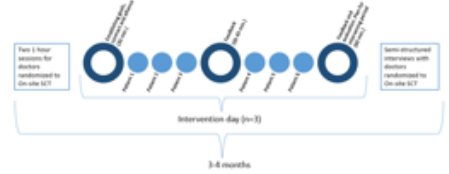


Figure 2: Overview of the intervention. On-site SCT: On-site Supportive Communication Training.

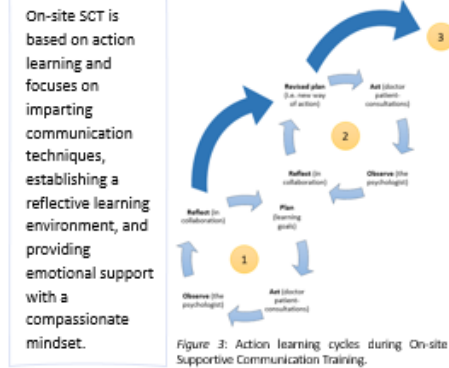


Figure 3: Action learning cycles during On-site Supportive Communication Training.

5 Results

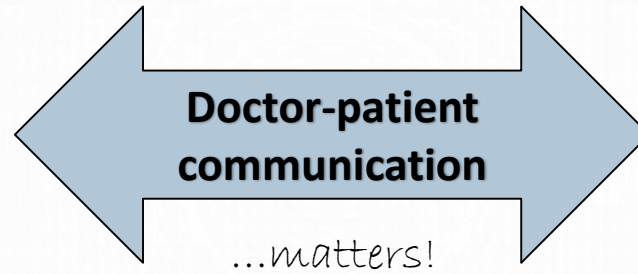
Results are pending.
The **primary endpoint** is the change in percentage of items rated as "excellent" by patients on the validated 15-item Communication Assessment Tool.

Secondary endpoints include changes in doctors' ratings of self-efficacy in health communication, burnout, and job satisfaction, measured by questionnaires.

Qualitative interviews have been conducted with the doctors after the intervention to evaluate its relevance, feasibility, and working mechanisms.

Perspectives If On-Site SCT proves to be feasible and efficient, it could become a scalable concept for communication skills training in oncology and other healthcare settings.

BACKGROUND

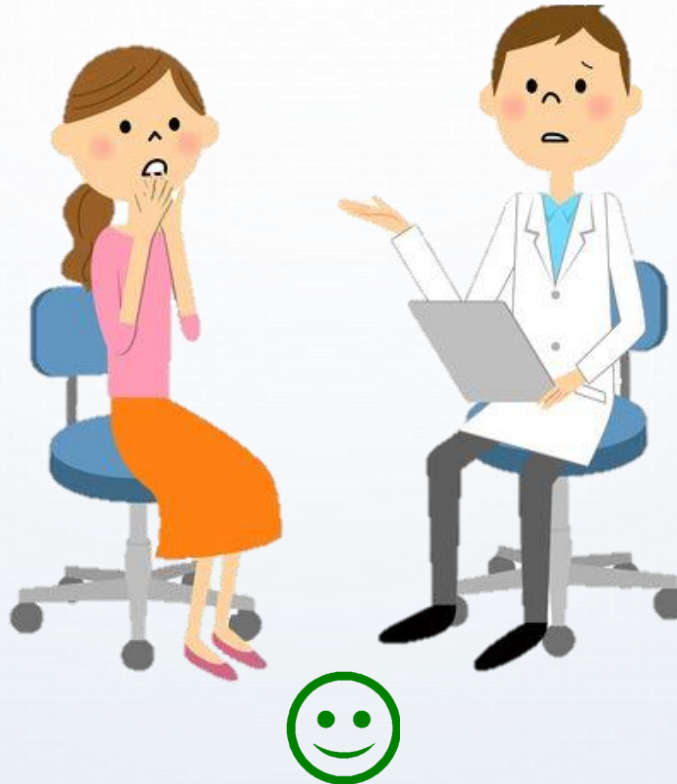


PATIENTS

Poor communication increases the risk of



- **Unnecessary treatment**
- Inadequate **pain** relief
- Higher **anxiety** levels
- Acute **hospitalizations**



DOCTORS

Insufficient communication skills training is associated with

- **Stress**
- **Burnout**
- **Low job satisfaction**



Effective communication strengthens the **doctor-patient relationship**, promotes **shared decision making**, improves patients' **quality of life**, increases patient **satisfaction** and **treatment adherence**.

RESEARCH GAP

Good communication is the



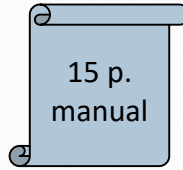
... How can we improve doctor-patient communication?

The truth is, we don't really know yet!

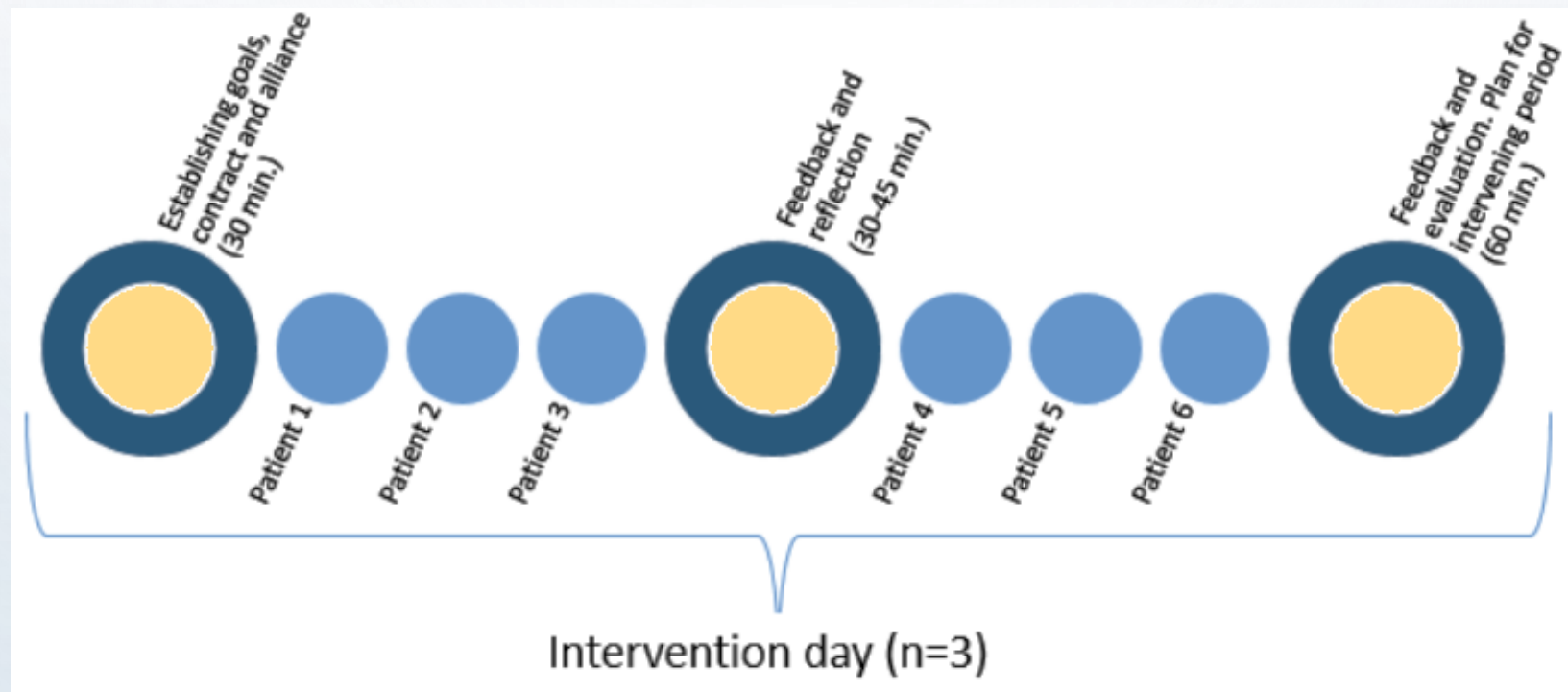
But we do have indicators, and based on these, we designed an intervention:

On-site Supportive Communication Training

INTERVENTION



- Three-day program, where doctors are followed and supported by trained psychologists.
- Based on action-learning, where the doctors set their own **learning goals** and time for **reflection** and **feedback**, is integrated during the day.
- The first **randomized** controlled trial employing **real time** doctor-patient interactions.

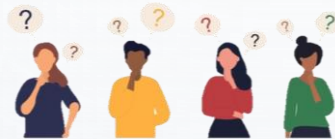


PERSPECTIVES



If On-Site Supportive Communication Training proves to be **feasible and efficient**, it could become a **scalable concept** for communication skills training in oncology and other healthcare settings.

AND THE RESULTS?



PENDING...
STAY TUNED!

In the meantime, the full protocol article is available here:

