

Representations of personalized medicine in cancer patients: a systematic review

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Introduction

During the last few years, personalized medicine [PM] became a popular topic in media¹. However, there is no clear definition of what it is and no consensus on the terms to refer to it².

Terms and definitions could have an impact on the representations (i.e. perceptions or beliefs) of PM³

Aim

To provide a global view of adult cancer patients' representations of PM and other related concepts (e.g. treatment-focused genomic tests, targeted therapies)

Methods

Following PRISMA Statement⁴, a systematic review of qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods studies were conducted

Topic: Adult cancer patients' perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, representations toward PM

Databases: Scopus, Web of Science, PsycINFO and PubMed

Keywords:



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Results

Among 922 screened titles, 22 studies were selected: 10 were quantitative, 10 were qualitative, and 2 were mixed-methods. All referred to somatic genomic testing to target mutations in adult cancer patients (*scan the QR Code to see a list of the included papers*).



Various conceptual approaches and methodologies are used in the studies to evaluate the representations, introducing difficulties in comparisons and synthesis of the results.

Four themes were identified:



Implications of the review

Methodological implications

It seems necessary to elaborate a standardized tool to evaluate cancer patients' representations of PM.

A majority of studies used a cross-sectional design. Longitudinal studies are needed to evaluate the impact of pre-existing representations on mental adjustment to cancer and their evolution.

Practical implications

The review reveals a paradox in patients: (over)positive attitudes but strong concerns relative to incidental findings. Both seems to be linked to misunderstanding and confusions that could be modulated by medical communication.

References

¹Marcon & al. (2018); ²Schleiden & al. (2013); ³Fournier, V. & al. (2021); ⁴Page & al. (2021)