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Perceptions, attitudes and experience of advance directive: Stakeholders' perspectiveCarmen WH Chan¹, Amy YM Chow², Kai Chow Choi¹, Raymond SK Lo³, Michael MK Shum⁴, Martin MH Wong¹, Helen YL Chan¹¹The Chinese University of Hong Kong²The University of Hong Kong³Shatin Hospital, Hong Kong⁴Grantham Hospital, Hong Kong

Background: Advance Directive (AD) is a written statement that allows mentally competent persons to make decisions concerning healthcare they would like to receive when they are no longer competent to make such decision in the future.

Aim: The aim of this study was to explore the perceptions, attitudes and experience surrounding AD and the factors contributing to the use of AD from the perspective of stakeholders in Hong Kong.

Method: 96 participants including 24 patients who were diagnosed with life-limiting diseases, 24 family members, 24 healthcare professionals, and 24 hospital volunteers were recruited from two hospitals in Hong Kong. All qualitative interviews were audiotaped, transcribed verbatim, coded and content analyzed.

Results: Most of the participants perceived AD as an option for them to plan the future medical decisions. Some preferred physicians to make the decisions for them. However, they have concern whether healthcare professionals would follow the AD that they make. Physicians were concerned about the cognitive and psychological status of patients when discussing AD. Social workers had more concerns about the logistics such as "should AD be signed in the elderly home?" In terms of influencing factors, six categories included physical and illness factor, personal situation factor, sociocultural factor, environmental factors, logistics and process of AD, and value system were identified.

Conclusion and implication: A better understanding of the stakeholders' opinion of and concerns about AD will help clinicians to better assist individuals and families in making advance decisions about the end-of-life healthcare they desire.

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Biography

Professor Chan's palliative care research focuses on the promotion of advance care planning and advance directives, and targets on cancer patients, pediatric patients, older adults and the general public. Her research initiatives on this area have demonstrated excellence in design and innovation, and a great impact on the health care profession and the society. Professor Chan has just completed another large-scale population survey on the acceptance and completion of advance directive among the general public in Hong Kong.

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