

Interaction with the peers improves the probability of acceptance of OnabotulinumtoxinA treatment in spinal cord injured (SCI) patients ---an Indian experience.

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**Background:**

Disease and treatment options are perceived very differently from the patients perspective. Strong emotional and subjective reactions are common to newer and less commonly practised treatment forms. Accepting a newer form of treatment is not easy for most patients.

**Reasons for reluctance to the newer forms of treatment .**

- Limited awareness.
- Lack of reliable information sources.
- Fear of the unknown treatment.
- Negative or unfavorable opinion from other doctors .
- Cost factor.

**Methods to help the patients adapt to newer treatment options.**

- Time and effort to help patients overcome their concerns and fears.
- Peers provide this support well in a personal manner.
- Peers provide emotional support and reassurances beyond the medical jargon and complexities.
- Experiences from support centres for the substance-abuse, malignancy treatment and major surgeries well established.

**Methods:**

Randomly assigned SCI patients, proposed to receive OnabotulinumtoxinA treatment for NDO

**Group A :** 84 patients; Consulted by the Urologist alone.

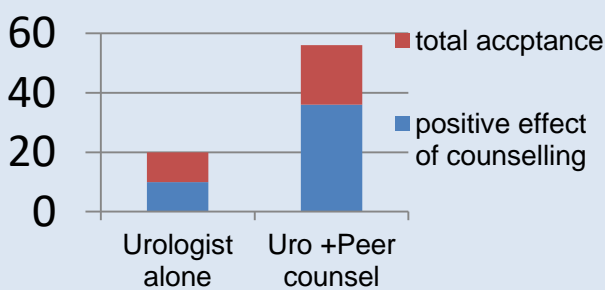
**Group B :** 84 patients; After an initial Urologist’s consultation, had informal interactions with peers and fellow patients, who had earlier received the same treatment.

- **Acceptance rates for the proposed treatment recorded.**
- **Responses about the influence of peer counselling on decision making obtained.**
- **Reasons for their decision making noted.**

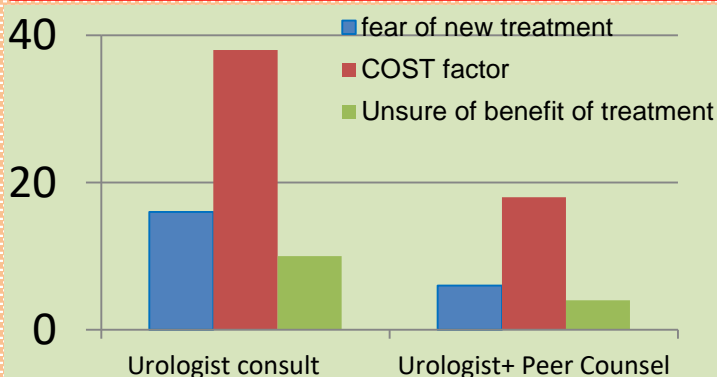
**Results**

consultation	A---urologist counslt alone	B- Urologist plus Peer counselling
Total no. patients	84	84
Accepted Onabotulinum treatment	20	56
Did not accept treatment	64	28

**Impact of Counselling-- Patient’s perception**



**Reasons for non-acceptance of the proposed treatment**



**Discussion:**

- Peer consultation reduces anxiety and keeps patients more at ease and comfort.
- Peer opinion perceived by patients to be more honest and free from bias.
- Peer opinion reinforces the urologist’s advice well.
- “If others could benefit from this treatment.....So would I.” is a common perception.
- Even among the patients who did not accept the given treatment, fear and anxiety was reduced substantially.
- Yet the hard fact of “who is paying for it” still remained an important factor .
- Patients with the Third party Payor were most readily willing to accept.

**Conclusion:**

Informal interaction with the peers and fellow patients, in addition to the physician’s consultation,

- Helped patients resolve their concerns and queries better.
- Encouraged greater participation and informed decision making.
- Helped patients make up their mind better and improved the acceptance rates especially for the newer treatment choices.

**We must encourage formation of patient support groups for their mutual support and guidance.**