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Coronary angioplasty patients' preferences for information about treatment risks: a survey study.

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Background: Percutaneous Coronary Intervention (PCI) is the commonest invasive procedure in cardiology. Before treatment consent must be given. As part of this communication process patients receive information about the risks and benefits of PCI and alternative treatments. Published studies tell us that the amount and quality of the information received by patients undergoing PCI is variable; benefits are often overestimated, risks forgotten and alternative treatments not always considered. Very little is known about patients’ preferences for PCI risk information. Aim: To describe patients’ preferences for formation about PCI treatment risk as part of the informed consent process Methods: A cross-sectional survey was distributed to 350 participants treated with PCI across 10 PCI centres in England. Results: Three hundred and twenty six participants completed the survey. Thirty percent of the sample reported needing help to understand written medical information. Fifty-one percent were treated with elective PCI, 75% were male, average age of 66.5 years. Recall and comprehension of PCI information given during the consent process was generally limited; 47% and 61% agreed that patients do not usually understand, or remember, the information given to them respectively. Eighty-eight percent of urgent PCI patients wanted to know about all possible risks compared to 90% of elective cases. Most participants (88% urgent and 94% elective) believed that PCI would reduce their risk of a future heart attack. Conclusion: A significant proportion of PCI patients find it difficult to recall or understand information about treatment risks. It is recommended that patients are given health-related information designed to accommodate different health literacy levels in advance of their treatment.