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Titel des Beitrags:
ComOn Coaching: Study protocol of a randomized controlled trial to assess the effect of a varied number of coaching sessions on transfer into clinical practice following communication skills training.

Abstract:
Communication skills training has proven to be an effective means to enhance communication of health care professionals in oncology. These effects are well studied in standardized settings. The question of transferring these skills into clinical consultations remains open. We build up on a previous developed training concept consisting of a workshop and coaching. This training achieved a medium effect size in two studies with standardized patients. In the current study, we expanded and manualized the coaching concept, and we will evaluate effects of a varied number of coaching sessions on real clinical consultations. Our aim is to determine how much coaching oncologists need to transfer communication skills into clinical practice. Physicians of two German medical centers will participate in a workshop for communication skills and will be randomized to either a group with one coaching session or a group with four coaching sessions following the workshop. The participation is voluntary and the physicians will receive medical education points. Consultations held by the participating physicians with actual patients who gave their informed consent will be filmed at three time points. These consultations will be evaluated by
blinded raters using a checklist based on the training content (primary outcome). Secondary outcomes will be the self-evaluated communication competence by physicians and an evaluation of the consultations by both physicians and patients. We will evaluate our communication training concept on three levels - rater, physician and patient - and concentrate on the transfer of communication skills into real life situations. As we emphasize the external validity in this study design, limitations will be expected due to heterogeneity of data. With this study we aim to gain data on how to improve communication skills training that will result in better patient outcomes. German Clinical Trials Register DRKS00004385.