The outcomes for advanced cancer patients with or without Advance Directive (AD)

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Introduction
AD is a new concept to Asian cultures. There are concerns that AD may have negative effects on patients' psychology or survival.

Objectives
To demonstrate the feedback of patients and their families after AD engagement and compare the survival rates of engaged and non-engaged groups.

Methodology
Prospective cohort study with locally designed questionnaires. Adult patients with advanced malignancy referred to a palliative care centre from 24 April 2009 to 30 July 2009. Survival data were updated on 24 April 2013. Locally designed questionnaires were given to patients who engaged an AD, and their families after the patient had passed away

Result
There were 191 eligible patients, of which 120 (63%) signed an AD, and 71 (37%) did not. Most of the engaged patients (82.5%) did not ‘feel bad’ during the discussion. They felt they were respected (95.8%), could express their own thoughts (95%), had lower anxiety levels (87.5%), had a better understanding of their disease status (95%) and could express their wishes to health care professionals (95%) and their families (90.8%). It helped them to plan their last wishes in advance (93.3%). Most of the families could understand the patient's wishes for the treatment direction (75.8%). They agreed that the patient was respected (76.7%) and their wishes were being honoured in their end of life period (75.8%). The overall survival rate of the two groups was similar.