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STUDY ON INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS OF PATIENTS REFERRED FROM THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES TO A FRENCH HAEMATOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT, M Ruzsniowski, G Mambou, R Cordier, B Lepee, M Fillion, R Zittoun, Service d'Hematologie, Hotel-Dieu, Place du Parvis, Notre-Dame, F-75004 PARIS

Many patients (pts) with severe haematological diseases (acute leukemia, aplastic anemia) are currently referred from third world countries to advanced haematological units, to obtain specialized, high risk treatments. The question of informed consent, both before and at the time of their referral, was investigated by means of a self-report questionnaire and interview. Comparisons made between 10 overseas patients, (3 from Tahiti, 7 from Algeria and Morocco) and 8 French pts, show that:-

1) Foreign pts are not less well-informed about their disease before referral than are French pts.

2) Foreign pts appear eager to be referred because of hope of cure tending to ignore the risks of such treatment as is being proposed, as well as duration of hospitalization. In contrast, French pts appear to be more sceptical and to accept a "no choice" decision of hospitalization, with a vague hope of long term cure.

Foreign pts frequently feel 'lost' on arrival, but seem to adapt rapidly. (# one week).

Both groups have fully accepted the treatment, in spite of absence of formal informed consent.