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Application of Standardized Genetic Counseling in Medical Services in Korea

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Genetic testing is increasingly integrated into clinical practice across a broad range of conditions, including rare genetic diseases, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and chronic kidney disease (CKD), and has become an important component of patient management. Genetic counseling is a professional process that supports the interpretation of genetic test results and facilitates informed decision-making for patients and their families. In Korea, however, genetic counseling services have not yet been sufficiently standardized or systematically integrated into the healthcare system. Although the Korean Society of Medical Genetics and Genomics has implemented a certification system for genetic counselors, it has not yet been recognized at the national level. As a result, there are differences across medical institutions in the availability of trained personnel and in the provision of genetic counseling services, which may affect the consistency and accessibility of counseling in clinical practice. This lecture focuses on the role of standardized genetic counseling in clinical care and highlights the need for a team-based model in which medical geneticists and genetic counselors collaborate. Evidence from a recent study conducted in Korea demonstrated that team-based genetic counseling is associated with high levels of patient satisfaction. In addition, patients who received counseling within six months of diagnosis showed significantly higher scores on the Korean version of the Genetic Counseling Outcome Scale (K-GCOS) than those who received counseling later. These findings suggest that genetic counseling extends beyond information delivery, with potential positive implications for patients' quality of life. In conclusion, standardized genetic counseling is essential in clinical practice for the consistent and effective use of genetic testing, and its integration into the healthcare system requires the establishment of institutional frameworks and the development of a specialized workforce.

Keywords: Genetic counseling, Team-based genetic counseling, Genetic Counseling Outcome Scale (K-GCOS), Patient satisfaction