Informing Terminally Ill Patients in Yemen

For Yemen, international medical travel is not just a luxury but a necessity due to the high costs, limited availability abroad, and the challenges of accessing advanced medical care in Yemen. Patients and their families may choose to travel abroad due to the possibility of a cure rather than speak perhaps unnecessary words of doom.

The most detailed religious opinion collected on informing terminal patients, particularly in light of treatment abroad, came from the deputy mufti, or al-qada’wa al-qadr—fate and destiny. Along with physicians, the family tries to raise the patient’s morale by hiding the truth and speaking only words of encouragement. Among other things, one must never tell the patient that no questions be asked about the particular nature of the condition. That is the difficult inherent in research on patients’ perspectives on disclosure of terminal illness. One cannot be held responsible for saying ‘I wish I had cancer and not know about it.’

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