

Support for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Patients through a Case Study

MATSUDA Yoshie

Graduate School of Science for Human Services, Ritsumeikan University

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Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) patients require flexible, fine-tuned support tailored to the individual patient. This study explores support for ALS patients, their families, their physicians in charge, and care providers by analyzing conversations between the author and an ALS patient (Matsuda 2004).

The conversation analysis method uses consulting support plus certain types of functional support (A.C. Chamberlain, 2006) using the author's own classification method. As a result, it is found that ALS patients require support for: 1) appropriate means of communication, 2) positioning for others to consider their thoughts, 3) waiting periods for them to relay their decisions, and 4) coordination support. Family support requires a means of communication with patients. It is also important that explanations of diseases use plain language regarding the diseases and their symptoms. Interviews with other patients and their families are also effective means for a care provider to collect information. Support for physicians requires interviews with the patients, to be coordinated at appropriate times. Care providers can then understand the patient's descriptions regarding the type of care that they desire, and this also requires expanded conferences and meetings.