

Measuring the Efficacy of Introductory Pamphlets on Patient Satisfaction

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Introduction

Recent developments in Medicare and Medicaid legislation link physician reimbursement to patient satisfaction, resulting in an incentive to improve the quality of patient care^{1,2}.

- The inability of patients to recognize their caregiver is a hurdle to quality patient care. Studies have shown up to 75% of inpatient patients can not name a single physician on their care team³.
- Recognition of caregivers is important because it increases patient satisfaction⁴.
- Various methods have been tried to increase caregiver and physician recognition by patients, including providing physician cards containing the physician's name, photograph, and role in care⁵, and using 8 x 10 inch photographs of the health care team⁴.
- Simply providing each patient their physician's name in writing improves the ability to recall the physician's name from 14.7% to 76.2%⁶.

Our study was designed to assess a novel method for patients to delineate different members of the healthcare team, and by doing so ultimately improve the satisfaction of their care. This method entails the use of an introductory pamphlet which allows patients to identify members of the care team and connect with them on a personal level.

Methodology

- Patients admitted to an internal medicine team at an urban hospital participated in this study from April-May of 2013, February-March of 2014, August-September of 2016, and November 2017-January 2018. Half of these patients were given introductory pamphlets (Group A), and half did not (Group B).
- All patients were given a survey on day of discharge which evaluated the pamphlet, quality of their care, and ability of the patient to distinguish different members of the medical team who they interacted with.

PATIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

Please circle one of the following:
SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N= Neutral, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

Pamphlet Assessment

I used the introductory pamphlet handed to me throughout my hospital stay	SD	D	N	A	SA
This pamphlet helped clarify which member of the medical team I saw each day	SD	D	N	A	SA
This pamphlet improved the quality of my overall healthcare	SD	D	N	A	SA
This pamphlet improved the quality of my overall hospital stay	SD	D	N	A	SA
I would like to receive a pamphlet like this during future hospital visits	SD	D	N	A	SA

How did you use the pamphlet?
What did you like about the pamphlet?
What would you change about the pamphlet?

Physician Assessment

My physician showed interest in my questions and concerns	SD	D	N	A	SA
My physician spent an adequate amount of time with me	SD	D	N	A	SA
My physician treated me with respect	SD	D	N	A	SA
My physician has an adequate level of knowledge and skill	SD	D	N	A	SA
My physician kept me informed of my health care plan	SD	D	N	A	SA

Additional Questions (Please circle Y for "Yes" or N for "No")

1. Was a medical student involved in your care each day?	Y or N
2. Was a resident involved in your care each day?	Y or N
3. Was an attending physician involved in your care each day?	Y or N
4. Were you able to tell the difference between each of the 3 members listed above?	Y or N

Thank you for your participation ☺

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Results

- 167 patients were surveyed in this study. 86 patients were assigned to the pamphlet group A and 81 patients were assigned to the non-pamphlet group B.
- Attending physicians were rated higher in satisfaction by patients in the pamphlet group (**mean 22.37/25**) versus the non-pamphlet group (**mean 21.11/25**) (p=0.048).
- Patients rated pamphlets highly on its ability to clarify which member of the medical team they saw each day (**mean 4.24/5**) (SD 0.81).
- Most patients answered that they would like to receive similar pamphlets in future hospitalizations (**mean 4.19/5**) (SD 0.89).

Conclusions

- Introductory pamphlets given during hospitalization do increase patients' satisfaction with their physician and improves the ability of patients to differentiate between different members
- Studies have showed a correlation with patient satisfaction scores and positive clinical outcomes⁷.
- Thus interventions such as introductory pamphlets may represent a cost effective way to improve patient health.
- In addition, patients who are able to identify an attending physician feel more informed about their hospitalization, which in turn may be linked to greater rates of patient satisfaction⁸.
- Furthermore, informing and improving a patient's understanding about their own care can help in avoidance of costly repeated admissions and improvement of health literacy⁹.
- High patient satisfaction is becoming vital for hospitals as society grows away from volume and quantity of care, and more toward quality and outcome measures.
- Therefore introductory pamphlets should receive greater consideration from hospitals and medical care teams across the nation.

References

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