Understanding the Patient Engagement Technology Experience

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Introduction

Patient Engagement Technologies (PETs) are designed to enhance patient engagement through education, self-management, and communication with the care team. Little is known about the patient experience using a PET. Here, we aimed to understand patient perceptions of PET use.



Methodology

Primary data was collected from patients who had used a PET throughout their colorectal surgery experience. Individual semi-structured interviews were performed to explore perceptions of telemedicine use. Usability of PET and trust in their provider were evaluated using the SUS (out of 100) and WFPTS (out of 50) instruments, respectively. Patient demographics including age, race, sex, and diagnosis were also recorded.

Results

Among 14 participants, 64% identified as female, 64% as White, and 29% as Black, closely mirroring the racial demographics of the study region. Half of the patients underwent surgery for a cancer diagnosis, 29% for benign diagnoses, and 21% for IBD. Mean age was 44 (SD=18), PET usability was 78/100 (SD=17), and trust was 48.6/50 (SD=3.3).

Patients felt that PETs met three major needs:

Receiving information

- Pre-operative preparation
- Post-operative expectations
- Personalized information
- Educational videos
- Constantly available information

Monitoring symptoms

- Reduce fear
- Symptom queries
  - Reassurance, expectations
  - Management of symptoms and pain
  - Increase awareness

Maintaining communication

- Identifying warning signs
- Continuously informing
- Feeling supported
- Reducing time required to communicate with providers

Results

PETs were difficult for the elderly and contained medical terminology that was difficult to understand. Post-operative surveys were often tedious, especially as patients were recovering. Patients trusted in what the doctor said more than what was described in the PET.

Conclusion

Establishing the PET as a supplementary tool, and utilizing more health-literate wording can allow for patients to better access the major benefits as described: receiving information, monitoring symptoms, and communicating with providers.

Recommendations

PETs are useful but would be better utilized in the post-operative period by a caregiver while patients are focused on recovering.

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