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Research

Learning new tricks: An assessment of novel versus traditional patient counseling strategies

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Abstract

Objective: To determine if there is a difference between the knowledge acquisition produced by traditional patient counseling strategies versus novel Coumadin patient counseling strategies.

Methods: Participants were exposed to a verbal-based or video-based patient counseling session. The same content of the Coumadin Rap Song (CRS) was orally delivered to participants within the verbal-based arm by a licensed pharmacist. A ten-question assessment was administered to participants in both the groups before and after exposure to the respective counseling sessions. Performances on the assessments were evaluated on a scale from 0% to 100%.

Results: A total of 50 participants were screened and included in the study. Of these, 26 participants were assigned to the CRS group and 24 participants were assigned to the verbal-based group. Assessment of score changes from baseline between the verbal and CRS groups did not demonstrate statistical significance ($p = 0.18$; Fig. 2). Evaluation of responses within the CRS and verbal-based group revealed statistical differences from baseline (Tables 1 and 2).

Conclusion: Video-based counseling was shown to be equally effective as verbal-based counseling techniques. Widespread implementation of video-based mediums may find favor within various health care settings. Increasing the amount of innovative platforms for patient education can potentially augment counseling efforts of health care professionals.

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Keywords: Coumadin Rap Song (CRS); Patient counseling; Electronic mediums

Introduction

Descriptions of patient counseling

Patient counseling is a cornerstone service provided by pharmacists. Pharmacists are confronted with time constraints that restrict their abilities to offer counseling to patients in various health care settings.¹ The best method for

patient counseling has not yet been established. Professional development activities have been implemented to assist pharmacists in the application of terms such as counseling, consulting, and educating.² With respect to pharmacists' counseling, the communication traditionally assumes the form of a monologue in conjunction with printed patient information. In a community pharmacy setting, patients are typically asked if they would like to receive consultation when picking up their medications.³ Pharmacists' attempts to provide education to patients are often met with refusals or tacit approvals.⁴ Aspects of these behaviors are often found to be poor predictors of optimal medication adherence.

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Venues for patient counseling

Notable electronic advancements are continuing to aid in this regard. Smartphones and personal computer tablets, in addition to social media websites, are being used to relay counseling points at various levels of literacy.⁵ With the advent of deliverables such as podcasts, the ability to retrieve information quickly is gaining global acceptance.⁶ The appeal of these communication media is ease of accessibility, with the option of repeating desired selections.⁷ Audiovisual aids such as YouTube[®] are also finding favor due to the innovative techniques captured through this resource.

Originated in 2005, YouTube[®] has revolutionized methods for information delivery. Users have the opportunity to post selections on YouTube[®] at no cost, which is likely to greatly encourage the free dissemination of information.⁸ Efforts to demystify common disease states for a wide array of observers are ongoing.⁹ The ability to regularly access frequently updated content is often a benefit of YouTube[®] for health care personnel. The impetus for the construction of the Coumadin Rap Song (CRS) was a co-author's experience working in an outpatient pharmacy of a large inner-city hospital. He received a prescription for Coumadin with the directions "ut dic." Upon further investigation, it was determined that the patient was recently diagnosed with a deep vein thrombosis. The patient announced that he could only remember to take the pill once a day when queried about dosing considerations and precautions with the medication. It was then conceived that a teaching instrument could be designed in the form of a rap song with pertinent information in the lyrics.

The "Coumadin Rap Song" (CRS) YouTube[®] video is an animated amplification of patient education that has generated in excess of 80,000 views.¹⁰ The CRS begins with pleasantries being exchanged by a pharmacist and a patient. This interaction often mirrors the community pharmacy environment prior to patient counseling commencing. Pictures were incorporated throughout the CRS that aided in the reinforcement of 16 pertinent educational points ranging from food–drug interactions to pharmacokinetic considerations. The depictions of patient counseling observed on the video can be contrasted to traditional counseling methods in community pharmacies.

Innovative videos such as CRS may symbolize a paradigm shift in the conveyance of information. In an era replete with unprecedented technological advancements, we are compelled to challenge our conventional methods of teaching and learning. The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a difference between the knowledge acquisition produced by traditional patient counseling strategies and novel Coumadin Rap Song (CRS) patient counseling strategies.

Rationale and objectives

Impetus for innovative strategies in patient counseling

Therapeutic regimens are often complex, crafted specifically to individual patient needs. We lack uniform metrics

to determine if patients truly comprehend how to take their medications. Measuring understanding from patients' perspectives regarding optimal medication adherence remains a work in progress.¹¹ Therefore, health care providers/practitioners are encouraged to deliver accurate information concerning the use of medicinal agents in an informative and engaging manner.^{12–14}

Study objectives

The authors hypothesized that use of college-aged, Coumadin-naïve students in the research study was appropriate to evaluate the effectiveness of novel and traditional patient counseling strategies.

The individuals targeted for inclusion typically are not expected to be prescribed the therapeutic agent in the study. However, the authors' aim was not to evaluate adherence to the therapeutic agent featured in the CRS. The authors sought primarily to investigate differences in retention observed in receipt of the message from the different communication platforms. The primary objective of this study was to evaluate patient counseling effectiveness observed between video- and verbal-based media. This effectiveness was gauged based on the use of a multiple-choice assessment tool. The secondary objective of this study was to evaluate changes in knowledge within the video- and verbal-based delivery methods.

Methods

Procedure

Inclusion in the study was based upon participants being non-science/medical students, 18 years of age or older, and screened responses to the question "What do you know about the drug 'Coumadin'?" In efforts to recruit participants in a non-threatening manner, a free-response question was deemed to be more conducive than a series of close-ended questions. An uninformed response about the medication, levied at the discretion of the primary investigator, was used as inclusion in the study. The rationale for excluding science/medical students is that their knowledge base was expected to exceed that of a typical patient receiving warfarin. Regular recruitment sessions occurred at different locales on South University's—Savannah, GA campus. Screening sessions were performed solely by the principal investigator. At this point, he described the intent of the study, which took approximately two minutes. Decisions for inclusion were performed on an individual basis. Informed consent was obtained from each individual prior to study participation. The study was approved by South University's Institutional Review Board.

Survey

The demographic information collected included participants' age, gender, and course of study, as described

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