Patient Preferences: Improving Hospital Stays for Patients and Caregivers

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Abstract

Hospitals can be a very scary environment when information is not understood or passed on from person to person correctly. An important detail could be missed or misinterpreted, providing room for large medical errors. Having medical professionals working alongside inpatients’ and caregivers’ input overall provides a better experience for healthcare. Specifically, their input could describe their information needs and gives an idea to make healthcare decisions. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between patient’s and caregiver’s preference to electronics for assistance based off the information needs they have expressed.

Introduction

Inpatients and caregivers self reported undesirable events within a hospital setting. An undesirable event is classified as an event that could have been avoided and potentially caused complications.

Surveys were sent out to Seattle Children’s Hospital and Virginia Mason. The information needs of patients and caregivers were studied to understand what they want out of their healthcare system.

The analysis and visualization of the data will demonstrate how many individuals categorized an electronic aid to be useful. Findings should lead to ways for more positive healthcare.

Methods

Data was retrieved by the surveys done in SurveyGizmo and turned into CSV format, imported into Microsoft Excel 2013, and analyzed into relationships such as the want of electronic assistance between patients and caregivers.

The built in count tool was utilized to count how many were patients, caregivers, and how many used electronic assistance.

How many wanted an electronic device, how many electronic selections were made and the differences between patients and caregivers when choosing were hand counted.

The data was further combined in their studied relationships where graphs were then made in Microsoft Excel 2013.

Results

As depicted in Figure 1, most age groups responded with about 50% or under wanting an electronic device for assistance. The electronic selection is represented in Figure 2 without the age group to further constrain the data. These are the categories patients and caregivers had to choose from when discussing information needs. Visually, Figure 2 shows how caregivers are less likely to want electronic assistance compared to inpatients. Overall, the caregivers numbers were much lower even though the number of inpatients and caregivers were similar (refer to Table 1. 135:111).

Discussion and Conclusion

The overall study showed that electronics are not really desired as an aid to patients or the caregivers. This could be because they are used to receiving information in a specific way, such as verbal communication or paper handouts.

Despite the low interest, the results will be used to design an application that fills the information needs of patients and caregivers and gives them access to their healthcare records. This will also be a tool that can further provide better communication between medical professionals and the patient.

Limitations of this study are that it was only conducted at two local hospitals which can limit variety. Variety was also constricted as patients in the mental care unit as well as those deemed too sick to participate were not represented equally, potentially skewing results.

Table 1. How many patients compared to caregivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient or Caregiver?</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patient</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. How many individuals used electronics in the hospital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usage electronic devices in the hospital</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Total:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patient or Caregiver:</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acknowledgements

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References
