Informed Patients: Perspectives from Research on the Physician-Patient Relationship

> Dr. Wendy Levinson Professor of Medicine University of Toronto

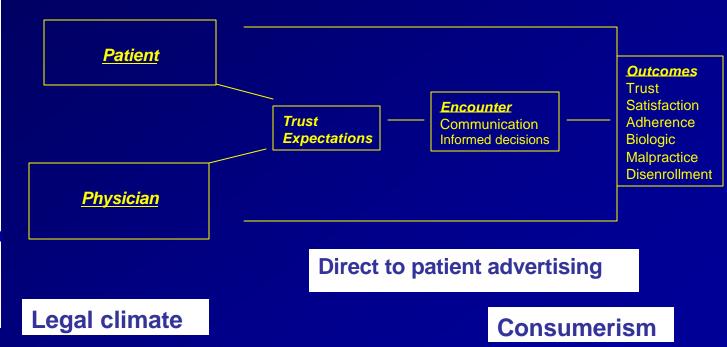
> > May 30, 2003



Health Care Environment

Access to medical information

For-profit health care



Outcomes Of Communication

- ?Trust
- ? Satisfaction
- ? Adherence
- ? Biologic
- ? Malpractice
- ? Disenrollment

Implications

- ? Policy decisions have an impact on the environment, in turn affecting the actual interaction between doctors and patients.
- ? True informed decisions depend on the quality of communication between the doctor and patient.

Patient Centered Care (IOM) "Healthcare that ensures that decisions respect patients' needs and preferences and solicits patients' input on the support they need to make decisions."

Informed Decision-Making Criteria

- 1. Discussion of the patient's role in decision-making
- 2. Discussion of the clinical issue or nature of the discussion
- 3. Discussion of the alternatives
- 4. Discussion of the pros and cons of the alternatives

Informed Decision-Making Criteria

5. Assessment of the patient's understanding

- Discussion of uncertainties associated with the decision
- 7. Exploration of patient preference

Rates of Performance of Informed Decision-Making Elements

Element	Percentage (n=217)
Patient role	
Nature of decision	84
Alternatives	30
Pros and cons	26
Uncertainties	17
Patient understanding	7
Patient preferences	27

Implications

- ? Informed decision-making conversations
 fall below ethical and legal standards
- ? Malpractice implications
- ? Training of physicians
- ? Time during the visit

Financial Incentives and Conflicts of Interest in the Doctor-Patient Relationship

- ? State and Federal regulations require disclosure of physician financial incentives
- ? Managed care has heightened patients' concerns
- ? Some patients raise this issue directly with physicians

Research Question

 What are patient preferences for disclosure of physician financial incentives?

2. Can disclosure occur without diminishing patient trust?

Methods

- ? General Social Survey 2002
- ? 3000 participants
- ? "Some doctors or groups may be paid more if they limit the use of expensive tests or the use of specialists. Such arrangements are known as financial incentives."
- ? Audiotapes of a variety of different communications strategies

Methods: Outcomes

- ? Satisfaction with the visit
- ? Trust the physician to put your interest above costs
- ? Agree with doctor's decision
- ? Plan to switch doctors or health plans

Results

- ? 50 % of public have heard of financial incentives
- ? Blacks, Hispanics and less educated less likely to know about them
- ? 95% want to be told
- ? prefer information to be provided by health plan representative at time of enrolment **and** by doctor

Common enemy

It used to be that physicians were able to provide tests for patients just to set their minds at rest. Unfortunately, your health plan won't allow me to do it for that reason. Even though I'd like to order it for you, your plan is not going to pay for it.

Dealing with Emotions

I can understand that you're worried about whether everything is OK. It also sounds like you're worried that I'm not ordering the test because it's too expensive. These days with Managed Care lots of people share your worries about this. I want to set your mind at rest because I truly do not think that the test is needed at this point.

Results

	Common Enemy	Emotion
Agree with Decision	38%	54%
Trust	27%	40%
Switch doctors	60%	45%

Implications

 ? Federal and State requirements for disclosure

- ? Health Plans and doctors need to disclose
- Some ways to disclose will decrease trust

Overall

- ? Patients are truly informed by health professionals though effective communication
- ? Policy decisions directly and indirectly affect the interaction between physicians and patients
- ? Disclosure of financial incentives may affect the outcomes of care