eConsent

Patient recall of information about procedures, including risks and benefits and potential outcomes, is often insufficient.

Bethune et al., from University of Toronto, sought to determine whether a multimedia patient educational tool enhances the informed consent discussion for elective neurosurgical procedures by increasing patient knowledge of the procedure.

Adult patients from a single neurosurgical site eligible for 4 neurosurgical procedures (lumbar spine or cervical spine decompression for degenerative disease, craniotomy for brain tumor or trigeminal neuralgia treatment) were offered enrolment. Patients were randomly assigned to either the control arm (standard consent discussion) or the intervention arm (review of an e-book containing information tailored to their disease/injury plus standard consent discussion). Participants completed a 14-item questionnaire before and after the consent discussion.

Questionnaires were completed by 38 participants, 18 in the control group and 20 in the intervention group. The mean age was 62.2 (standard deviation [SD] 13.6) years and did not differ significantly between the 2 groups. The mean baseline questionnaire scores were similar for the control and intervention groups (20.4 [SD 7.3] v. 20.6 [SD 6.7]). However, the mean scores on the follow-up questionnaire were significantly different between the 2 groups (20.2 [SD 4.0] v. 23.2 [SD 4.9], p = 0.02). There was no change in the scores on the 2 questionnaires in the control group, whereas, in the intervention group, the mean score was significantly higher after the intervention (p = 0.03).

The use of an electronic booklet appears to improve patients' knowledge of their surgical procedure. The use of multimedia booklets in clinical practice could help standardize and optimize the consent process, ensuring that patients receive the relevant information to make a truly informed decision [1].

1)
Bethune A, Davila-Foyo M, Valli M, da Costa L. e-Consent: approaching surgical consent with mobile technology. Can J Surg. 2018 Aug 1;61(5):16017. doi: 10.1503/cjs.016017. [Epub ahead of print] PubMed PMID: 30062997.