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SAPIENZA
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HEALTH LITERACY INTERVENTIONS

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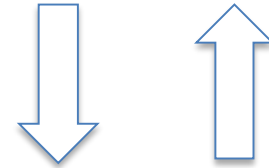
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HEALTH LITERACY INTERVENTIONS TO IMPROVE PATIENT HEALTH



GETTING THE
MOST OUT OF
YOUR PATIENT
VISITS



GETTING THE
MOST OUT OF
VISITS TO YOUR
DOCTOR

DOCTOR – PATIENT COMMUNICATION

- PATIENT-CENTRED APPROACH
 - Assess what patients already know about their condition (“Can you tell me what you already know about your condition?”)
 - Help patients focus on what they “should do” instead of “what they should know more”



COMMUNICATE CLEARLY

- SPEAK SLOWLY
- LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION YOU GIVE BUT REPEAT THE INFORMATION AT EVERY VISIT
- AVOID MEDICAL JARGON
- USE PICTURES TO EXPLAIN KEY MESSAGES
- USE EASY-TO-READ WRITTEN MATERIALS
- MAKE THE VISIT INTERACTIVE
- ASK YOUR PATIENTS TO REPEAT THE INFORMATION BACK TO YOU TO MAKE SURE THEY UNDERSTOOD WHAT YOU TOLD THEM



ASK FOR CLEAR COMMUNICATION

- ASK YOUR DOCTOR TO SPEAK SLOWLY
- ASK YOUR DOCTOR TO REPEAT THE INFORMATION AT EVERY VISIT
- ASK YOUR DOCTOR TO AVOID MEDICAL JARGON
- ASK YOUR DOCTOR TO USE PICTURES TO EXPLAIN KEY MESSAGES
- ASK YOUR DOCTOR TO USE EASY-TO-READ, WRITTEN MATERIALS
- MAKE THE VISIT INTERACTIVE
- REPEAT THE INFORMATION BACK TO YOUR DOCTOR TO MAKE SURE YOU UNDERSTOOD WHAT THE DOCTOR TOLD YOU



SPEAK SLOWLY

- WHEN A DOCTOR SPEAKS FAST, PATIENTS, ESPECIALLY ELDERLY PEOPLE, MAY NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT IS BEING SAID
- COMPARED TO OTHER PATIENTS, LOW LITERATE PATIENTS ARE LESS LIKELY TO ASK THEIR DOCTOR TO SLOW DOWN OR REPEAT THE INFORMATION



ASK YOUR DOCTOR TO SPEAK SLOWLY

- ASK YOUR DOCTOR NOT TO SPEAK FAST, ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE AN ELDERLY PERSON
- ASK YOUR DOCTOR TO SLOW DOWN OR REPEAT THE INFORMATION



LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION YOU GIVE BUT REPEAT THE INFORMATION AT EVERY VISIT

- PATIENTS HAVE DIFFICULTIES REMEMBERING THE INFORMATION SHARED WITH THEM DURING MEDICAL VISITS
- IT APPEARS THE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION PATIENTS REMEMBER IS "INVERSELY PROPORTIONAL" TO THE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION THEIR DOCTOR SHARED WITH THEM
- LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION YOU SHARE WITH PATIENTS BUT REPEAT MESSAGES TO FACILITATE RECALL OF CRITICAL INFORMATION
- FOCUS ON 1 OR 2 KEY POINTS THAT YOUR PATIENTS NEED TO KNOW



ASK YOUR DOCTOR TO REPEAT THE INFORMATION AT EVERY VISIT

- ASK YOUR DOCTOR TO GIVE YOU LESS INFORMATION TO HELP YOU BEST MEMORISE THE INFORMATION RECEIVED
- ASK YOUR DOCTOR TO LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION SHARED WITH YOU AND TO REPEAT IT
- ASK YOUR DOCTOR TO FOCUS ON 1 OR 2 KEY POINTS THAT ARE CRITICAL FOR YOU TO KNOW



AVOID MEDICAL JARGON – STRIVE TO USE PLAIN LANGUAGE AND AVOID MEDICAL TERMS WHEN SPEAKING TO PATIENTS

INSTEAD OF

- BENIGN
- CARDIAC
- CRONIC

- EDEMA
- FATIGUE
- SCREENING
- ENERGY INTAKE
- GENERIC
- ADVERSE EVENTS



USE

- NOT HARMFUL
- (RELATING TO) THE HEART
- LASTING A LONG TIME, NOT
ENDING

- SWELLING
- FEELING TIRED
- TEST, EXAM
- WHAT YOU EAT AND DRINK
- UNBRANDED
- SIDE EFFECTS



USE PICTURES TO EXPLAIN KEY MESSAGES

- VISUAL IMAGES AND GRAPHICS REINFORCE KEY INFORMATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
- IT IS EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO REMEMBER VISUAL IMAGES THAN WORDS OR LETTERS
- USE OF GRAPHICS HELPS PATIENT UNDERSTAND AND MEMORISE INFORMATION



USE EASY-TO-READ WRITTEN MATERIALS

- ALL PATIENTS AND NOT JUST THOSE WITH LOW LITERACY SKILLS PREFER INFORMATION THAT IS CONVEYED IN A SIMPLE AND CLEAR WAY
- USE BULLETED POINTS TO PRESENT WELL-STRUCTURED INFORMATION
- FOCUS ON FEW KEY POINTS
- USE MAIN POINTS AND SUB-POINTS TO BREAK DOWN BLOCKS OF INFORMATION
- USE PLAIN LANGUAGE AND AVOID MEDICAL JARGON
- USE A RESOLUTE TONE



TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATION...

- IN WRITTEN COMMUNICATION:
 - BREAK DOWN INFORMATION INTO CONCISE KEY POINTS
 - WRITE READABLY
 - USE ACTIVE VOICE “TAKE YOUR MEDICINE AT 12 NOON”
 - USE SHORT SENTENCES, 5TH GRADE LEVEL

- ENGAGE THE PATIENT FAMILY



RISKS AND NUMBERS

- USE A CONSISTENT DENOMINATOR
- WHEN REFERRING TO RISK, INDICATE ABSOLUTE RISK AND NOT RELATIVE RISK
- REFER TO FREQUENCY INSTEAD OF RISK PERCENTAGES
- AVOID USING ONLY POSITIVE OR ONLY NEGATIVE FRAMES, USE BOTH



RISKS AND NUMBERS

- ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF THE ACTION YOU ARE ADVISED TO TAKE UNTIL YOU FULLY UNDERSTAND THE INFORMATION GIVEN TO YOU



INFORMING ABOUT MEDICINES

- STRIVE TO ADAPT THE TREATMENT SCHEDULE TO THE PATIENT ROUTINE
- SIMPLIFY TREATMENT REGIMEN AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE
- HAVE YOUR PATIENTS CONFIRM HOW THEY TAKE THE MEDICATION (“TELL ME HOW YOU TAKE THE MEDICINE”)
- MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TO ASSESS PATIENT COMPLIANCE



KNOWING YOUR MEDICINES

- KNOW WHY AND HOW YOU NEED TO TAKE A MEDICINE AND ITS NAME
- GIVE CLEAR INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR ROUTINE SO THAT YOUR DOCTOR CAN ADAPT YOUR TREATMENT SCHEDULE TO IT
- EXPLAIN IN A CLEAR WAY HOW YOU TAKE THE MEDICINE
- BE COLLABORATIVE AND STICK TO THE DIRECTIONS GIVEN BY YOUR DOCTOR



MAKE THE VISIT INTERACTIVE

- ENCOURAGE PATIENTS TO ASK QUESTIONS
- INVITE PATIENTS TO ASK QUESTIONS DURING THE VISIT INSTEAD OF LEAVING THEM AT THE END



MAKE THE VISIT INTERACTIVE

- ASK QUESTIONS DURING THE VISIT, ANYTIME THERE IS SOMETHING THAT IS UNCLEAR TO YOU, INSTEAD OF LEAVING QUESTIONS FOR THE END OF THE VISIT



ASK YOUR PATIENTS TO REPEAT THE INFORMATION BACK TO YOU TO MAKE SURE THEY UNDERSTOOD WHAT YOU TOLD THEM

- VERIFY THAT PATIENTS UNDERSTOOD THE INFORMATION BY ASKING THEM TO REPEAT IT
- IF PATIENTS CANNOT REPEAT THE INFORMATION, THIS MEANS IT WAS NOT WELL COMMUNICATED TO THEM
- EXPLAIN ANEW ALWAYS STARTING FROM THE MAIN PIECE OF INFORMATION
- ASK AGAIN YOUR PATIENT TO REPEAT THE INFORMATION GIVEN TO HIM/HER



WHERE DO WE STAND?

- “WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU STILL HAVE...?”
- “I GAVE YOU VARIOUS PIECES OF INFORMATION, TO BE SURE I WAS CLEAR AND DID A GOOD JOB, CAN YOU TELL ME ...”?



REPETITION TO CONFIRM UNDERSTANDING

INSTEAD OF SAYING: «*Does it make sense*»?

IT IS BETTER TO ASK: «*Can you tell me please how I need to take the medicine?*»



ASK TO REPEAT THE INFORMATION TO CONFIRM YOU UNDERSTOOD

- ASK TO REPEAT THE INFORMATION RECEIVED TO BE SURE YOU UNDERSTOOD WHAT WAS SAID
- BE SURE YOU UNDERSTOOD YOUR TREATMENT PLAN
- REPEAT IN YOUR OWN WORDS WHAT YOU THINK THE DOCTOR SAID (*“YOU SAID A NUMBER OF THINGS, TO BE SURE I UNDERSTOOD, I’D LIKE TO REPEAT ...”*)



APART FROM DIRECT INTERACTION WITH PATIENTS

1. WRITTEN INFORMATION MATERIAL
2. INFORMATION ABOUT MEDICINES
3. SUPPORT WITH DISEASE MANAGEMENT
4. INCREASING PATIENT EMPOWERMENT



APART FROM DIRECT INTERACTION WITH PATIENTS

1. WRITTEN INFORMATION MATERIAL

- LARGE FONT SIZE
- 5TH GRADE READING LEVEL
- VISUALS
- CLEAR HEADLINES



APART FROM DIRECT INTERACTION WITH PATIENTS

2. INFORMATION ABOUT MEDICINES

- GIVE PRECISE DIRECTIONS (“TAKE THE MEDICINE AT 9 IN THE MORNING, THEN AT 4 IN THE AFTERNOON AND AT MIDNIGHT”)
- THE DESCRIPTION OF THE MEDICATION MUST INCLUDE (I) THE NAME OF THE MEDICINE AND (II) DOSE
- USE GENERAL IMAGES THAT MATCH THE TEXT



APART FROM DIRECT INTERACTION WITH PATIENTS

3. SUPPORT WITH DISEASE MANAGEMENT

- STRIVE TO BE “PRO-ACTIVE”, i.e. PREVENT SIDE EFFECTS
- SUPPORT SHOULD BE TAILORED TO THE PATIENT NEEDS, CONSIDERING BARRIERS AND OBSTACLE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL PATIENTS
- IF POSSIBLE, PROVIDE DETAILS OF CONTACTS THE PATIENT CAN TURN TO



APART FROM DIRECT INTERACTION WITH PATIENTS

4. INCREASING PATIENT EMPOWERMENT

- PROVIDE CLEAR, TRANSPARENT INFORMATION, AND FORMS THAT ARE EASY TO FILL OUT
- TEACH THE PATIENT TO ASK:
WHAT IS MY PROBLEM?
WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?
WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR ME TO DO THIS?

IN GENERAL

➤ DIAGNOSIS

WHAT IS MY MAIN PROBLEM ?



➤ TREATMENT

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

➤ CONTEXT

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR ME TO DO THIS?



IN GENERAL

- CONSIDER TAKING SOMEONE WITH YOU WHEN GOING TO SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR TO THE HOSPITAL
- HAVE THE RESULTS OF ANY PRESCRIBED TEST BEFORE YOUR NEXT VISIT TO THE DOCTOR
- IDENTIFY WHO IS IN CHARGE OF YOUR TREATMENT

