Pharmacist-Patient Communication Techniques

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Pharmacist-Patient Communication Techniques

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Background

Without effective patient communication: 1,2,3

- Patients dissatisfied with care
- Decreased patient involvement in their health
- Misunderstandings of drugs/medical conditions

Effective patient communication is important to: 1

- Enhance patient-provider relationships
- Create a safe/open atmosphere
- Improve transfer of medical information
- Improve medication adherence, health outcomes, and knowledge
- Help patients achieve positive outcomes

Resources/Methods

Various systematic literary searches were conducted on multiple databases to find communication literature.

Search Strategy:

- General communication techniques
- Communication techniques for all healthcare providers (Physician, Nurse, etc.)
- Communication techniques for pharmacy & pharmacy practice

Databases/Search Engines Searched:

- Communication Abstracts (EBSCOhost)
- ComDisDome (ProQuest)
- PubMed
- EMBASE
- American Pharmacist Association Library
- Access Pharmacy
- Google Search

Search Terms:

- Communication
- Interpersonal communication
- Oral communication
- Nonverbal communication
- Verbal communication
- Patient-centered care
- Motivational interviewing
- Pharmacy communication
- Cultural competency
- Health literacy

Results/narrowed to:

- Clinical trials and review articles
- Literature focusing on communication with patients, not between healthcare professionals
- Publications discussing topics relevant to pharmacy’s role in healthcare
- Exclude replicated information

Results

After a general PubMed search for patient-communication literature using MeSH terms (“healthcare personnel”, “physicians”, “nurses”, and “pharmacists”), only 0.62% of the literature was related to pharmacists.

Search Results in PubMed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MeSH Terms</th>
<th>Search Results</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Healthcare Personnel”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Physicians”</td>
<td>9130</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Nurses”</td>
<td>5071</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Pharmacists”</td>
<td>261</td>
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</table>

Communication Techniques

Based on the lack of pharmacy guides available on patient communication, a toolkit was created with tips and techniques for pharmacists to employ while communicating with patients.

Verbal Communication Techniques

- Active Listening
- Open-ended Questions
- Consistent Referring
- Limiting Technical Medical Terms
- Caution with Humor
- Limiting Small Talk

Nonverbal Communication Techniques

- Gesturing
- Maintaining Eye Contact
- Smiling
- Head Nodding
- Maintaining Open Posture
- Eye Level
- Forward lean
- Uncrossed arms
- Being aware of Tone of Voice
- Being aware of personal space
- Being aware of sitting arrangement
- Considering Dress/Appearance

Communication Barriers

- Patient Derived
- Provider Derived
- Environment Derived
- Cultural Differences

Education Communication Techniques

- Indian Health Service Model
- Teach-back

Behavioral Change Communication Techniques

- Transtheoretical Model of Behavioral Change
- Motivational Interviewing

Decision Making Communication Techniques

- Shared Decision Making Model

Patient Centered Communication Techniques

- Avoid dehumanizing patients

Discussion

With a lack of literature directed specifically to communication techniques in pharmacy practice, pharmacists must rely on literature directed towards other healthcare disciplines to procure information related to patient interactions.

Utilizing communication techniques is imperative to create an effective relationship and environment to allow for productive conversations.

While having scientific knowledge of medications is an important aspect of being a pharmacist, it is equally important that pharmacists are able to communicate this information effectively to patients.

By helping patients understand their health and the value of medications through effective communication, pharmacists can affect patients’ health outcomes and quality of life.

Literature Cited