Picking a Proxy on the Web: Interactive Patient Interview Module For Health Care Proxy Documentation

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The Problem

- When ill or incapacitated, patients may be unable to make their own medical decisions.
- A health care proxy (HCP) form is a legal document formalizing the appointment of a surrogate decision-maker.
- The 2010 ACOVE study of community dwelling elders found that patients who had not completed an advance directive but had given surrogate decision-maker information to their provider, 0% (ACOVE-1) and 16% (ACOVE-2) had documentation in their medical record.(1)
- In a 2011 study on 1,121 patients in an oncologic ICU, only 534 (47.6%) had HCP documented in their medical record.(2)
- **Current health care proxy status documentation among BIDMC system outpatient clinic patients seen at least once between 1/1/2012 and 12/31/13.**

Health care proxy status	Percentage
Not addressed	67%
Addressed but deferred	16%
Addressed and chosen	17%

- A study from 2004 showed that physician reminders alone were not associated with greater advance directive completion rate, but reminders plus mailings to patients of advance care planning forms and other materials did increase advance directive completion rates (14% vs. 1.8%) as well as HCP completion (10% vs. 1.3%).(3)

Aims

Study the impact of our novel approach of using a web-based interactive patient interview module for healthcare proxy on:
- Patient appointment of health care proxy
- Provision of a completed health care proxy form

Intervention

An interactive web-based interview module within patient portal through which patients can provide information about their health care proxy. This module will also have an integrated education section which answers common questions, provide background information about the importance of health care proxies, and advise patients how best to discuss their care preferences with loved ones. Once the patient provides the health care proxy information, it will be stored in the patient's electronic medical record for the provider to review.

Progress to date

We are currently developing this module and developing evaluation plan collaborating with the Conversation Ready team at BIDMC.

Lessons Learned

- Health care proxy information is asked in a small percentage of patients and an even smaller number of patients provide this information.
- For successful implementation of new health IT projects, collaboration between all stakeholders will be important to develop and evaluate the value delivered by these projects.
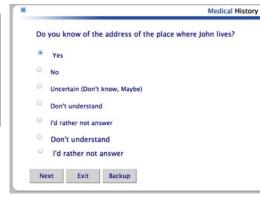
Interview Module with fictitious patient information

Next Steps

- Implementation of the module within patient portal
- Evaluation of the impact of the module on health care proxy appointment and completion of healthcare proxy form
- Further studies looking at
  o Communication of HCP information with other family members and providers
  o Impact on advance care planning
- Development of another module for documenting patient's care wishes to aid in advance care planning

References and Acknowledgement

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