

Title of Intervention: Patient/Provider Communication Assistant

Intervention Strategies: Individual Education, Provider Education

Purpose of the Intervention: To improve communication between providers and patients about colorectal cancer screening

Population: Health care providers and patients aged 50-80 years old

Setting: Large family practices and community health centers in rural Vermont; health care facility-based

Partners: Local senior center, adult basic education center, local university

Intervention Description:

- Individual Education: Patients received Patient/Provider Communication Assistant, a computer-based educational program, immediately before their health care visit. They answered questions on the about their history of colorectal screening, intentions to be screened in the future and their lifestyle risk factor information. Each question was on an individual screen. Photos of each screening method were included. Each question was read aloud via an audio component. Based on the age and gender of the patient, the computer selected one appropriate video clip of a personal testimonial about participating in a screening. The final screens were personalized recommendations based on the responses to the prior questions and included pictures that were appropriate to the recommendation. Participants completed the program in 10-14 minutes in a private setting with a staff person available to provide instruction if necessary. A written summary of the responses to these questions and a recommendation to speak with the health care provider about screening was provided to the patient.
- Provider Education: A provider reminder that indicated patients' self-reported colorectal cancer screening status, intentions to be screened and personal risk factors was placed in the patient's chart before their next medical visit.

Theory: PRECEDE Model, Transtheoretical Model

Resources Required:

- Staff/Volunteers: Office staff person to provide assistance for computer program
- Training: Training on software use
- Technology: Computer, printer, computer program
- Space: Space for computer kiosk
- Budget: Not mentioned
- Intervention: Computer program, print-out for patient and provider, access to patient charts
- Evaluation: Exit interviews, interviewer

Evaluation:

- Design: Quasi-experimental
- Methods and Measures: Exit interviews were conducted to assess patients' interactions with the provider, plans to be screened and opinions about the computer program

Outcomes:

- Short Term Impact: Provider recommendations for colorectal cancer screening significantly increased. Patients who were not up-to-date with screening guidelines and received the intervention were more likely to plan to get screened than those in the comparison group.
- Long Term Impact: Not measured

Maintenance: Not mentioned

Lessons Learned: The Patient/Provider Communication Assistant achieved its goals of engaging rural patients from a wide range of ages and educational backgrounds and providing them with personalized educational messages about colorectal cancer screening.

Citation(s):

Geller BM, Skelly JM, Dorwaldt AL, Howe KD, Dana GS, Flynn BS. Increasing patient/physician communications about colorectal cancer screening in rural primary care practices. *Med Care*. Sep 2008;46(9 Suppl 1):S36-43.