Nurses’ Experiences and Perceptions of Using Online Resources for Patient and Family Education: A Qualitative Interview Study

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Nurses educate patients and families.
Nurses use resources from the Internet to provide education.
(Pretty much) everyone uses the Internet to look for health information (1).

But...

little is known about nurses’ actual experiences using online educational resources and discussing them with patients

Study objectives
• Gain in-depth understanding of nurses’ experiences using resources such as Krames Online, MedlinePlus, or other websites to educate patients and their families
• Identify themes that can be used to design questionnaires and outreach education for nurses, managers, and administrators

METHODS
1. Recruit participants at Providence St. Joseph Medical Center in Burbank, CA
2. Conduct semi-structured interviews
3. Transcribe and code interviews as they are completed
4. Share coded transcripts with nurse co-investigators
5. Re-code transcripts incorporating feedback from nurses
6. Identify and synthesize major categories and themes

PRELIMINARY RESULTS
The study has received IRB approval, and we are now recruiting and interviewing participants. Interviews will continue until thematic saturation has been reached.

Interviews so far suggest that
• Division identified by Dickerson et al. remains, nearly fifteen years later
• Nurses worry about inaccurate or inappropriate material found online by patients and families
• Google, disease-specific websites, and organizationally mandated material (Krames online) are common sources for patient education materials
• Nurses use their own knowledge and experience, and reach out to colleagues, to educate patients

SELECTED LITERATURE
• 2005 study of oncology nurses identified
  • a division between nurses who “were insulted when patients challenged their expertise based on information gleaned from the Internet,” and nurses who viewed Internet health information as a catalyst for change and a facilitator of patient-provider relationships
  • nurses’ function as “knowledge consultants,” facilitating patients’ searches, evaluating information needs, individualizing information, and correcting misinformation
• 2011 observational study of nurses in practice found that
  • nurses had very little time to search for information
  • hospital policy often required the use of particular educational materials
  • lack of knowledge and previous negative experiences hampered use of online resources

References

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