

Video tool improves health literacy in prostate patients

November 13 2014, by Catherine Williams

A video-based tool given to prostate cancer patients significantly improved their understanding of key terms essential to making decisions about prostate cancer treatment, according to a study initiated by the Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University and published today in *Cancer*, the peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society.

The study was led by three principal investigators with the Winship Cancer Institute: senior author Viraj A. Master, MD, PhD, FACS, Winship urologist and director of clinical research in the Department of Urology at Emory University; Ashesh B. Jani, MD, professor of radiation oncology in the Emory School of Medicine; and Michael G. Goodman, MD, MPH, associate professor of epidemiology with the Rollins School of Public Health.

This breakthrough research was spurred by another Emory study by the same authors released in 2013 that showed a severe lack of comprehension of prostate health terms among [prostate cancer](#) patients treated at Grady Hospital in Atlanta. The earlier study showed only 15 percent of the patients understood the meaning of "incontinence"; less than a third understood "urinary function" and "bowel habits"; and fewer than 50 percent understood the word "impotence."

Master, an investigator in both studies, says he and his colleagues felt compelled to respond to their earlier findings by seeking solutions to the problem. The new study hypothesized that a video-based educational tool would improve understanding of key terms.

The researchers developed a software application with narrated animations depicting 26 terms that doctors and medical staff routinely use in talking with prostate [cancer patients](#). Patients were recruited from two low-income safety net clinics and their comprehension was tested before and after viewing the application. According to the research, the 56 men who completed the study achieved statistically significant improvements in comprehension for the majority of the terms. For instance, before viewing the application, 14 percent of the men understood "incontinence"; afterward, 50 percent of them demonstrated comprehension of the term.

"This shows that video tools can help patients understand these critical prostate health terms in a meaningful way. The ultimate goal is to give patients a vocabulary toolkit to further enable them to make shared and informed decisions about their treatment options," says Master. "Our next goal is to improve the tool further, and study this tool at different centers."

The research for this study was made possible by a Winship Cancer Institute multi-investigator pilot grant and the contributions of faculty and students from Winship, the Rollins School of Public Health and the Emory School of Medicine.

"These Winship investigators identified a need for better access to healthcare information among many men facing prostate cancer," says Walter J. Curran, Jr., MD, executive director of Winship. "This novel video-based tool provides a powerful means of fulfilling this critical need."

More information: Wang, D. S., Jani, A. B., Sesay, M., Tai, C. G., Lee, D. K., Echt, K. V., Goodman, M. G., Kilbridge, K. E. and Master, V. A. (2014), "Video-based educational tool improves patient comprehension of common prostate health terminology." *Cancer*.

doi: 10.1002/cncr.29101

Provided by Emory University

Citation: Video tool improves health literacy in prostate patients (2014, November 13) retrieved 5 May 2024 from

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