

ICU clinicians cautiously support electronic portals

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(HealthDay)—Clinicians are cautiously supportive of an electronic

portal to enhance communication in the intensive care unit (ICU), according to a study published online Oct. 4 in the *Annals of the American Thoracic Society*.

Sigall K. Bell, M.D., from Harvard Medical School in Boston, and colleagues conducted focus groups to glean the perspectives of 26 clinicians from six ICUs on the current state of communication among patients, families, and clinicians, and assess their views on whether and how an electronic portal may address existing communication deficits and improve care.

The researchers found that the common themes reflecting clinician perspectives on communication challenges and desired portal functionality were comprehension and literacy, results and updates, patient and family preferences, inter-clinician communication, family informational needs, the ICU as an unfamiliar environment, and enhancing humanism through technology. Benefits across themes included enhanced education, patient/family engagement, and clinician workflow, while challenges included the stress and uncertainty of ICU care, fear of technology replacing human connection, existing inter-clinician communication failures, and the tension related to informing families without overwhelming them.

"As new technologies expand opportunities for greater transparency and participation in care, clinician buy-in and positive impact will depend, in large part, on the extent to which the concerns of stakeholders are addressed," the authors write.

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