Patients’ Need for Information about Medicine During Hospitalization

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Patient Safety through Intelligent Procedures

- EU funded project
- Major objective: Develop HIT systems that provide patients and clinicians with information about risk of medication error through decision support
Empower the patient

- Patients who are actively involved gets better results
- Patients can contribute to prevent medication errors
How do I know if I get the right drug?

- How does patients maintain an overview of his/her medicine to ensure proper intake? What sources do they use?
- Is individualized Health IT something the patients want?

- Interview of eight in-patients
- Elderly (54-88)
- Cardiac disease
Overview of medication regime

• During hospitalization the patient loses overview of their medicine. The patients feel comfortable with the nurses and physicians who are in control of the medication.

• “Once I had seventeen different drugs, but after my hospitalization, some has been taken away and others added. That’s really out of my control”.

• At home, the patient in general has excellent overview of their medicine, and use checklists, dosage packages or/and rituals.

• The routines and activities which grants the patients control of their medication at home, diminishes when hospitalized. The patients are left with information of varied character made available at the hospital. This poses a dependency on the health personnel which undermine patient control and empowerment.
Peace of mind

- Almost all of the patients feel comfortable about the nurses and physicians, who are in control of the medication. However, they feel dependent on the knowledge of the physician.
- “If you feel uncomfortable, it is similar to driving with a drunk driver [...] You have to trust them.”
- Being dependent on the health personnel can be a complex issue for the patient. The patient will not always raise the problem of a side effect and risk to question the physician’s decision.
Information about medicine from relatives

• The patients talk to relatives who know about health to get detailed information, or have a close relative who seeks information about medication on their behalf.

• Some patients does not talk about their medication even if their relatives or other in their network are knowledgeable about health

• “I try to keep it to my self. It would be wrong to place the responsibility [for the medication] to some one [in my social network].”
Information about medicine from health care professionals

• In general the patients contact the health care staff if they feel physical easy to talk to them

• Some patients find it difficult to communicate with the healthcare staff
  • Previous bad experiences

Half of the patients think the information from the staff is good. The other half experience uncertainty.
Information about medicine from various media

• Half of the respondents use the Internet. One patient uses the Internet himself and one patient has a close relative who finds information on the Internet.

• Most of the patients read the patient information leaflet from the drug packages and attain useful and often adequate information:

• “Along with the drug there’s a leaflet with all the information, side effects and so on”
The need for more or different kind of information about medicine

• Generally the patients feel that the patient information leaflet and the clinicians around them fulfill their needs for information about medication.

• Three of the patients do not think the hospital systems support their needs for information.
  • Access to internet
  • Access to data with conclusive statements
Design a HIT-system that empowers the patient

• Do not undermine the patients’ need to feel safe – the patients want to trust the staff
• Let the HIT support the patient and staff’s ability to communicate with each other
• Easy access to relatives or/and ‘Electronic Surrogate Relative Network’
• The HIT should show regard to the users ‘technology-age’
• Thank you