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Interactivity, Multimedia Improve Informed Consent

Authors cite improved patient understanding and reduced patient anxiety

An interactive computer program (IMP) provides better patient understanding than standard consent (SC) for radical prostatectomy (RP), according to a study published on the *BJU International* website.

Surgeons have legal and ethical obligations regarding the informed consent process for surgical procedures. Patients considering radical prostatectomy need to fully understand the procedure, alternatives, potential oncological outcomes, and complications, including erectile dysfunction and incontinence. Patients should also have the opportunity to revisit the risks and benefits after their initial urological consultation. The authors say that the standard consent process, which is often a verbal descrip-

tion of the procedure and its complications by the physician, fails to ensure that patients have understood the information. Although there are considerable multimedia resources available to physicians, the authors found little data regarding their effect on informed consent. Thus with

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the current study, the authors sought to compare an interactive multimedia presentation with SC.

Forty men undergoing RP randomly received SC or IMP, which was followed by a 26-item test regarding the procedure and its implications. After taking the test, the groups were crossed and re-tested. SC involved verbal interaction and discussion with physicians and nurses. IMP provided animated information on these topics, and included multiple-choice questions about key points. Patients could not

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progress until they responded correctly, and were required to review the information following incorrect responses before repeating the question.

Patients who used the IMP answered a mean of 78 percent of test questions correctly as compared to the SC group, which answered a mean of 57 percent of the questions correctly. After the groups switched, the IMP group maintained their scores and the SC group improved their scores by an average of 11 percent. In addition, 67 percent of participants rated the IMP as easy to use or very easy to use. Although the data are limited, the authors note that patients appeared satisfied with the IMP approach, and

the IMP “thus appears likely to enhance the surgeon-patient relationship.” In addition, the IMP can record individual patients’ responses, which “might help the surgeon to identify any core misunderstandings that require more in-depth explanation,” they write.

Source: Gyomber D, Lawrentschuk N, Wong P, et al. 2010. Improving informed consent for patients undergoing radical prostatectomy using multimedia techniques: a prospective randomized crossover study. Published on March 19, 2010 on the *BJU International* website.

Mini-Needle Technique Reduces Vasectomy Pain

Patients fear higher pain levels than actually occur

The mini-needle technique of anesthesia compares favorably with standard vasal block and other options for vasectomy, according to a study published recently in *The Journal of Urology*. It also reduces the amount of anesthesia needed and requires minimal equipment.

Although vasectomy is a minor surgical procedure and the no-scalpel version has become the standard of care, fear of pain still deters many men from having it done. No-scalpel vasal block requires 10 cc of lidocaine without epinephrine given via a 25 or 27 gauge 1.5-inch needle. The authors of the current study found no prior data regarding use of smaller needles, and sought to assess the effect of mini-needles on real and anticipated pain. They included a total of 277 patients who had the mini-needle technique at a primary care or family planning clinic either between January and February

2007 or May and June 2009. Mean patient age was 38 years.

Participants were asked to complete a preoperative questionnaire on expected pain (score of 1 to 10, with 10 as the worst possible pain) and a postoperative questionnaire on actual pain related to vasectomy and actual pain related to anesthesia. Both questionnaires included a visual analog scale (VAS) and a visual descriptive scale. Patients reported almost no

pain during vasectomy and mild pain during anesthesia, but they expected a more severe “discomforting” pain. When the authors compared their study participants’ pain to that reported in studies using traditional vasal block, they found that mini-needles caused less pain (0.6 VAS score versus 1.9 to 3.3 VAS score).

3.3 VAS score). Mini-needles were also superior to other strategies including spermatic cord block, eutectic mixture of local anesthetics (EMLA) cream, and anesthetic

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buffering in terms of pain. In addition to its efficacy, mini-needle anesthesia requires less medication and no extra equipment than standard methods. The authors conclude that randomized clinical trials are needed, but that it “may be particularly suitable in low resource settings and may make vasectomy even more attractive and cost-effective.”

Source: Shih G, Njoya M, Lessard M, Labrecque M. 2010. Minimizing pain during vasectomy: the mini-needle anesthetic technique. *The Journal of Urology* 183:1959-1963.

Hot Topic Highlights

Urology Domain recently posted the following Hot Topics to your website:

Enlarged Prostate Drug Protects Against Prostate Cancer

According to a study published recently in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, dutasteride, a drug commonly used to treat enlarged prostate, reduces the risk of prostate cancer. The 4-year study revealed that dutasteride reduced the risk of prostate cancer by about 5 percent regardless of age, family history of prostate cancer, prostate specific antigen level and prostate volume at the study's start, International Prostate Symptom Score, and body mass index, a measure of weight.

Source:

Andriole GL, Bostwick DG, Brawley OW, et al. 2010. Effect of dutasteride on the risk of prostate cancer. *The New England Journal of Medicine* 362:1192-1202.

Caffeine Intake May Hurt Sperm Quality

The results of a study published on the *American Journal of Epidemiology* website suggested that men who consume more than one quart of cola every day may be decreasing the quality of their sperm. The study of 2,554 men concluded that compared to men who consumed low or moderate amounts of caffeine and/or cola, men who consumed high amounts of caffeine and/or cola had reduced sperm concentration and total sperm count, although this was only significant for cola. Men who consumed large amounts of cola had sperm counts that were almost 30 percent lower than men who didn't drink cola.

Source:

Jensen TK, Swan SH, Skakkebaek NE, et al. 2010. Caffeine intake and semen quality in a population of 2,554 young Danish men. Published on March 25, 2010 on the *American Journal of Epidemiology* website.