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Web 2.0 Diabetes Portal Enhances Patient Information Retrieval and Disease Management

Forum should be open and providers should log in frequently

According to a study published recently in the *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, Web 2.0 portals have great potential for supporting patients, both young and old. Clinical practitioners should be educated further on the use of these helpful interactive web tools.

Web 2.0 allows users to develop and manage content, which is a big step from the earlier Web 1.0. Healthcare organizations such as the World Health Assembly have encouraged the use of Web 2.0 in developing interventions for vulnerable groups.

Prior research suggested that children with diabetes needed better patient information and access to services; and that adults with the condition who interacted with Internet-based interventions had improved health, education, and

quality of care. The authors of the current study were interested in this population and thus sought to assess patient and parent attitudes toward a local Swedish portal tailored to those with type 1 diabetes.

The portal, called Diabit, was developed over several years based on input from both patients and healthcare profession-

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als. Launched in the spring of 2006, it contained diabetes-related information including educational videos and extensive text pages as well as social networking functions like message boards and blogs. Diabit was targeted toward

both adolescents and parents. For patients younger than age 12 years, the portal was targeted at parents. A total of 16 mothers, 3 fathers, and 5 young patients (ages 11 to 18 years) completed an essay on their experiences

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using the portal over a period of about 2 years. They were asked two main questions, about their subjective successes and failures using the site, and their responses were coded using qualitative content analysis.

The authors found that participant attitudes toward Diabit could be categorized into three main groups: the management tool, the generator, and the gatekeeper. As a disease management tool, respondents said they were able to search for and find information relevant to them and that they trusted the information they found. They especially valued being able to find answers to difficult questions focusing on sensitive areas, such as anxiety and fear. As a generator, they valued the ability for the portal to generate more information than expected as well as their own ability to share information that

was mediated by other users. The respondents also viewed the portal as a gatekeeper, which to them was negative. They expressed difficulty logging in and following password procedures.

Overall, the test group found Diabit to be very informative and helpful. They suggested having a more open forum to reduce password issues and the feeling of stigmatization; they also suggested having providers log in frequently to update information and show that they are invested in the patient's progress.

Source: Nordfeldt S, Hanberger L, Bertero C. 2010. Patient and parent views on a Web 2.0 diabetes portal – the management tool, the generator, and the gatekeeper: qualitative study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research* 12(2):e17.

Foam Sclerotherapy Effective for Varicocele

The filling-defects technique under fluoroscopy is feasible

Transcatheter foam sclerotherapy is an effective treatment for testicular varicocele, according to the results of a study published recently in the *Journal of Vascular and Interventional Radiology*.

Foam sclerotherapy has gained popularity in recent years as an alternative to the more traditional liquid sclerotherapy, which tends to dilute, inactivate, and distribute irregularly. While the foam version has been used successfully on varicose veins, reticular veins, telangiectasias, and venous malformations, little data existed on its use in varicoceles. The authors of the current study thus sought to investigate its effects on 58 patients at two hospitals in China who reported scrotal swelling and discomfort.

After physical examination, Doppler ultrasonography, and semen analysis, all participants underwent percutaneous foam sclerotherapy for left varicocele.

The treatment period was September 2002 to January 2007 and mean age was 21 years. Selective catheterization of the spermatic vein was achieved via a right transfemoral approach. The internal spermatic vein was filled with contrast medium before the foam sclerosant was injected and sclerotherapy was performed by the “filling-defects technique” under fluoroscopic guidance. No more

than 10 milliliters of sodium morrhuate foam was used at each treatment session.

Patients were treated on an outpatient basis. They were told to stay in bed for 2 hours after the pro-

cedure and to avoid heavy lifting and exercise for 7 days. Telephone follow-up was performed the next day and repeat physical examination, ultrasound, and semen analysis were performed at 6 months. There were no major complications or technical problems in any of the patients. Fifty-three out of 58 saw their varicocele disappear and 5 had slight, asymptomatic residual varicoceles. Mean sperm

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concentration and motility also improved after treatment. The authors noted that a lower dose of sclerosant was needed as compared to liquid sclerotherapy. They write that “fluoroscopy-guided transcatheter foam sclerotherapy is a safe and effective approach for varicoceles, and the filling-defects technique under fluoroscopy is a feasible method for tracing the sclerosing foam.”

Source: Li L, Zeng X-Q, Li Y-H. 2010. Safety and effectiveness of transcatheter foam sclerotherapy for testicular varicocele with a fluoroscopic tracing technique. *Journal of Vascular and Interventional Radiology* 21:824-828.

Hot Topic Highlights

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

Watchful Waiting a Viable Option for Low-Risk Prostate Cancer Patients

A study published recently on the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* website found that watchful waiting may be a suitable treatment for men with low-risk prostate cancer. A study of 6,849 men ages 70 years or younger found that the 10-year risk of prostate cancer-specific death was 2.4 percent for watchful waiting patients and 0.7 percent for curative intent patients.

Source:

Stattin P, Holmberg E, Johansson J, et al. 2010. Outcomes in localized prostate cancer: National Prostate Cancer Register of Sweden follow-up study. Published on the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* website.

Erectile Dysfunction Medications Linked to Hearing Loss

Using erectile dysfunction (ED) medications may lead to hearing loss, according to a study published in the *Archives of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery*. The study results seem to confirm a 2007 decision by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to add wording about possible hearing loss to ED drug labeling. The author analyzed information from 11,525 men ages 40 years and older and found that men with hearing loss were more than twice as likely to use a phosphodiesterase type 5 inhibitor compared to those who did not take the medication.

Source:

McGwin G Jr. 2010. Phosphodiesterase type 5 inhibitor use and hearing impairment. *Archives of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery* 136(5):488-492.