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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 inter-

ested 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 professionals. 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 using the portal over a period of about 2 years. They were asked two main questions, about their

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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 por-

tal 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

Fifty-three out of 58 saw their varicocele disappear and 5 had slight, asymptomatic residual varicoceles.

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 procedure 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

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58 saw their varicocele disappear and 5 had slight, asymptomatic residual varicoceles. Mean sperm 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

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

Reducing High Blood Pressure May Prevent Stroke

Nine out of 10 strokes are related to 10 simple risk factors, according to a study published recently in *The Lancet*. Analyses revealed that high blood pressure increased the risk of stroke the most out of all other factors, especially in people younger than age 45 years. Five risk factors — high blood pressure, being a smoker, obesity in the midsection, diet, and physical activity — accounted for 80 percent of the strokes that occurred. Ten risk factors — the previous five plus apolipoprotein (a type of cholesterol), high levels of stress, drinking more than 30 servings of alcohol each month, diabetes, and depression — accounted for 90 percent.

Source:

O'Donnell MJ, Xavier D, Liu L, et al. 2010. Risk factors for ischaemic and intracerebral haemorrhagic stroke in 22 countries (the INTERSTROKE study): a case-control study. Published on *The Lancet* website.

Stenting and Endarterectomy Equally Effective For Carotid Stenosis

Carotid artery stenting and carotid endarterectomy are both effective treatments for carotid artery narrowing, according to a study published recently on *The New England Journal of Medicine* website. They did note that stenting was more effective in younger patients and endarterectomy was more effective in older patients. Complications were rare, but stenting led to more strokes and endarterectomy led to more heart attacks.

Source:

Brott TG, Hobson RW, Howard G, et al. 2010. Stenting versus endarterectomy for treatment of carotid-artery stenosis. Published on *The New England Journal of Medicine* website.