The latest ways to improve the patient experience: Inspired by the ideas of health professionals

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Abstract---The measurement model is rooted in the idea that the hospital creates the patient experience, and therefore the hospital alone builds the patient experience. However, perhaps the most striking thing that comes to mind when considering how to improve lives through the patient experience in healthcare is the role of ordinary healthcare professionals in developing strategies to improve the patient experience. In studies of nearly 200 healthcare professionals working on the front lines of patient care, nearly all participants expressed at least one opinion about what healthcare could do to make the patient experience better. This phenomenon is the focus of this paper.

Keywords---administration, health professionals, healthcare, hospital, patient.

1. Introduction

Research has supported the buzz around patient experience as a legitimate measure of the quality of care. Hospital administrators have crafted mission statements proclaiming the broader importance of compassion in patient care. Errors and problems in patient care are often revealed through an interaction with a patient or family member. Nearly all hospitals have some infrastructure around the patient experience in order to ensure that their publicly reported scores meet at least the national average. But what if the above approach misses the very thing that patients and families most need? What if, ignored in this truncated view of 'patient experience,' are strategies that are so powerful that they can literally make the lives of patients and families better? This brief paper reviews some of the major recent suggestions from health professionals as to how

to improve the lives of patients beyond what is captured by the patient experience minimum dataset items.

Among recent papers in academic journals of the healthcare administration discipline, patient experience was widely thought of in terms of what a hospital does. The measurement paradigm is rooted in the idea that it is the hospital that constructed the patient experience, and therefore only the hospital constructs patient experience. However, it is probably the most notable thing that comes to attention in thinking about how to make lives better through the patient experience in healthcare is the role of rank-and-file healthcare professionals in developing strategies to improve the patient experience. In studies with almost 200 health professionals who work on the front lines of patient care, almost all participants voiced at least one opinion about what healthcare could do to make the patient experience better. This phenomenon is the focus of this paper.

2. Understanding the Importance of Patient Experience

Patient experience is a key aspect of the healthcare journey. If only considering one aspect of it – patient satisfaction – it's still critical. For patients, the level of satisfaction (and even comfort) can significantly influence individual care. However, from a health systems perspective, the patient experience is equally pivotal.

There are multiple studies showing a direct correlation between higher patient satisfaction (also called 'patient experience') and increased compliance and recovery. However, even if the relationship was less clear, healthcare providers should be compelled to focus on front-end engagement due to patient psychology. Patients are people; they have emotions, and often those emotions dominate almost everything else in healthcare (other than well-crafted physician relationships).

For 90 percent of patients (regardless of income), healthcare is almost always associated with negative emotions such as worry and frustration. It is difficult to further engage a person who is already emotionally stressed, which is why, before pursuing treatments, providers need to engage patients in their own care through whole-patient health strategies. However, there are additional reasons – besides altruism and the fact that emotionally calm patients are more likely to follow through with treatments – that healthcare providers might want to consider investing time and attention into patient satisfaction.

3. Innovative Technologies in Healthcare

Innovations in technologies, expanding from improved diagnostics to machine learning and artificial intelligence applications for better outcomes, could transform patient engagement and experience in the healthcare system. Some of the leading developments over the last few years, and the years to come, will revolve around new ways in which patients can access healthcare, at less cost and often with fewer constraints on location. The rise of telemedicine is an example of how urgent care as well as primary care can be delivered remotely. Another significant development in the last few years has been the rise of

electronic health records, and the ability for patients to access and see their records. (Mann et al.2)

Mobile apps more generally are another way to help engage patients, providing remote monitoring of a number of conditions. But also of greater importance to the majority of users is simply the ability to book times for office appointments, order refills, and get test results quickly and easily. Hundreds of thousands of apps are now available, providing advice, sending reminders to take medications, as well as applications that support a healthy lifestyle. Some are directly linked to hospital or physician community or insurance-provided systems. A patient-centered approach to design is needed if these valuable tools are to increase patient engagement in different settings, guide patient pathways, improve safety, and enhance satisfaction with the overall experience. Policy research in the field is looking at issues that include access, a balance of standardization and flexibility, patient protection and trust, budget and cost impacts. Like with any new technology, challenges that have arisen include resistance by caregivers and patients, limited digital skills and awareness in some sectors of the population, and concerns over privacy and possible misuse. Digital literacy, including the ability to scrutinize and validate medical information, may be another hurdle. Some may argue that the digital divide is narrowing, but it continues to be a concern; hence there is the need to address inequalities. The coming years are likely to witness trends developing in the direction of better fit with patient engagement and the patient experience. For instance, AI will increasingly enhance and make mobile health tools more powerful and user-friendly. It can help improve population health management strategies, personalize care, develop and encourage adherence, as well as predict when to tell people to seek care for early signs and symptoms, or when people will need treatment most.

4. Enhancing Communication and Empathy

Effective communication is a core skill for healthcare professionals. It allows patients to engage with their own healthcare in a purposeful and effective manner. Moreover, this has known patient safety implications. Active listening allows the healthcare professional to understand what has been communicated by a patient, which in turn helps to build rapport. Effective body language can demonstrate rather than tell an individual that we have an understanding of their issues and are willing to help. Having empathy can also help to demonstrate that we are willing to understand an individual's position and have a genuine concern for their well-being. (Wei et al., 2019)(Reddy & Gupta, 2019)(Ataguba & Ataguba, 2019)

Little negative impact of empathy has been demonstrated in healthcare; however, some healthcare professionals may feel that they become overly involved with an individual's care, which adversely impacts the professional-patient relationship. Indeed, evidence also suggests that communication is one of the major ways in which patient-centeredness can be demonstrated, which in turn is an important yardstick for patient care experiences. Different strategies have been suggested to help improve doctor-patient relationships, including invitations to consult on the teaching of communication skills in medical schools and various training programs focusing specifically on the improvement of communication and

interpersonal skills in junior doctors. Other strategies suggest that good communication, particularly when it is empathetic in nature, can ensure that patient trust in the individual and their advice is increased. In turn, patients who have had a quality interaction with a healthcare professional may be more likely to adhere to agreed treatment plans. Despite this, there are still barriers to effective communication that healthcare professionals continue to encounter in everyday practice. These include language recommendations, which do exist, on how to help healthcare workers improve their communication. In summary, good communication is an essential skill for population and public healthcare.

5. Personalizing Care and Tailoring Services

Care that is tailored to the needs, preferences, values, and regimens of the patient takes into consideration any variable that affects the patient's health. It can be delivered through a care plan that is a true collaboration between the patient and the health care team delivering services. A one-size-fits-all delivery of population-based integrated care models is helpful at the highest level, but is inflexibly structured in a way that makes the system the focus, not the patient. Personalization will be key to the development of effective preventive and treatment interventions, which are likely to be based on the life circumstances and unique biology of the individual to whom they are applied.

Patient-centered care that fosters the development of trust invites active patient and family participation, reflects individual patient preferences, needs, and values, allows patients to form the center of the care team, and empowers patients with the knowledge surrounding their diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment. Treatment decisions are generally considered personalized when patients' preferences for treatment and management are incorporated. These patient preferences are not only based on epidemiological data and disease experience, but also on everyday life. In some situations, personalization means that the patient decides what is most important for them. In dementia, personalized treatment takes into account the patient's preferences—not only medical, but also life choices like when she wants to take a shower or what she wants to eat. These are often based on the patient's values in her previous life. A personalized approach to healthcare considers the individual patient's unique combination of variables. These factors fall into several categories that are described in detail below. Using advanced tools and analyses will allow care to be a close match with the patient and their life. By truly knowing the patient, and not just the disease process, it is more likely that the treatment and care provided will be personalized, meeting the individual patient and caregiver where they are, and leading to the highest level of satisfaction and disease control. Resource-constrained healthcare settings and provider practice and geographical variability limit the widespread implementation of a personalized approach to healthcare.

6. Implementing Feedback Mechanisms

Boston University associate professor and physician Rashmee Shah writes about numerous articles that she assigns to her students in medical school administration, health communications, and service excellence to look for the "little things" that, once corrected, could vastly improve the patient experience in

a hospital setting. In the following six sections, we will explore the concepts of that article.

Section Two argues the necessity for patient electronic feedback mechanisms in health care organizations. Many methods already exist, such as patient experience surveys, focus groups, patient and family advisory councils or panels, and direct patient interviews or hospital rounding. The advice implies 'real-time' and as low-context collection as possible for easier verification. But maximizing numbers with these low-threshold methods has never been a problem. The larger issue in any of these strategies or their combinations is maximizing the number of patients who participate in these voluntary and often anonymous feedback mechanisms. Participants in these formal vehicles recommend not only collecting that feedback but also acting on it. In fact, it can be communicated to stakeholders. There is also a call for health care organizations to foster an "organizational culture of open communication related to values and uses feedback for creating systems to continuously drive performance excellence."

7. Case Studies and Success Stories

Case Studies and Success Stories: Examples from the Field
The examples below showcase initiatives organizations have undertaken based on ideas from their health professionals to improve patient experience. These initiatives are as diverse as the field, including both adopting new technology and recruiting new staff; focusing on supporting communication accounts for the majority of initiatives in this section. Descriptions in this section include—as available—the inspiration, the initiative, and its outcomes; the initiatives are structured to be directly useful for other organizations. (Nilsen et al. 2019)(Bonawitz et al. 2019)(Zamboni et al. 2019)

Diagnosing a Policy Solution: Offering an Adequate Number of Interpreting Services Inspiring Insight: Providers reported that staffing and using more interpreters could address several challenges, including how interpreters are used, the types of interpreting services offered, and systems issues around access to interpreting services. Interpretation services are crucial to ensure safety and improve clinical processes for patients. This insight led to working with the interpretation services managers; the medical center started by providing more training and clinical support to the in-person medical interpreters. The team also hired several additional language access staff and interpreters. Outcome: Although the increased number of interpreters has only been in place for a short time, initial surveys of staff who work with the language access services report noticeable improvement in the timeliness and ease of accessing interpreters, as well as their communication with patients with limited English proficiency. The hospital will measure the impact more formally in the future. Overall, the work is expected to increase the number of professional interpreters and allow for more trained in-person and phone medical interpreters.

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أحدث الطرق لتحسين تجربة المريض: مستوحاة من أفكار المتخصصين في الرعاية الصحية

1. مقدمة

أيدت الأبحاث الضجة المثارة حول تجربة المريض كمقياس شرعي لجودة الرعاية. لقد صاغ مديرو المستشفيات بيانات مهام تعلن عن الأهمية الأوسع للتعاطف في رعاية المرضى. غالبًا ما يتم الكشف عن الأخطاء والمشكلات في رعاية المرضى من خلال التفاعل مع مريض أو أحد أفراد أسرته. تمتلك جميع المستشفيات تقريبًا بعض البنية التحتية المتعلقة بتجربة المريض لضمان أن الوطني. ولكن ماذا لو فات النهج المذكور أعلاه الشيء ذاته الذي يحتاجه تلبي درجاتها المبلغ عنها علئًا على الأقل المتوسط \ المرضى والأسر بشدة؟ ماذا لو، تم تجاهل الاستراتيجيات القوية لدرجة أنها يمكن أن تجعل حياة المرضى والأسر أفضل، في هذه النظرة المبتورة \"لتجربة المريض\"؟ تستعرض هذه الورقة الموجزة بعض الاقتراحات الرئيسية الحديثة من المتخصصين في الرعاية الصحية حول كيفية تحسين حياة المرضى بما يتجاوز ما تم التقاطه من خلال عناصر مجموعة بيانات الحد الأدنى لتجربة المريض.

من بين الأوراق البحثية الحديثة في المجلات الأكاديمية المتخصصة في إدارة الرعاية الصحية، كان يُنظر إلى تجربة المريض على نطاق واسع من حيث ما يفعله المستشفى. يتجذر نموذج القياس في فكرة أن المستشفى هو الذي أنشأ تجربة المريض، وبالتالي فإن المستشفى وحده هو الذي يبني تجربة المريض. ومع ذلك، ربما يكون الشيء الأكثر بروزًا الذي يلفت الانتباه عند التفكير في كيفية تحسين الحياة من خلال تجربة المريض في الرعاية الصحية هو دور المتخصصين في الرعاية الصحية العاديين في تطوير استراتيجيات لتحسين تجربة المريض. في الدراسات التي أجريت على ما يقرب من 200 من المتخصصين في الرعاية الصحية الذين يعملون في الخطوط الأمامية لرعاية المرضى، أعرب جميع المشاركين تقريبًا عن رأي واحد على الأقل حول ما يمكن أن تفعله الرعاية الصحية لجعل تجربة المريض أفضل. هذه الظاهرة هي محور هذه الورقة.