The Effect of Radiologist-Patient Interaction: Are Patients Benefitting from Patient-Centered Communication Before Prostate Image-Guided Interventions?

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Introduction

• Patients frequently receive imaging results from referring providers who may not be well-versed in radiology exams, including prostate magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)

• Studies have found improved patient satisfaction and decreased anxiety levels following radiologist consultation \(^3,4,5\)

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of our study was to investigate whether patient-centered communication between radiologists and patients undergoing prostate MRI and image-guided prostate biopsy contributed to improved quality of care and a greater understanding of patients’ own medical condition and the role of the radiologist.
Methods

A single-arm pre- and post-intervention study involving 5 to 10-minute radiologist consultations was performed.

Evaluation using 5-point or binary rating scales:
- Patients’ understanding of the role of radiologists
- Prostate MRI
- Prostate cancer
- Anxiety level before and after the consultation
- Patient satisfaction level with consultation
- Preference for receiving results
- Prior experience with radiologist consultation

Virtual and in-person consultations in the pre-procedure holding area for patients awaiting image-guided prostate biopsy – discussed basic anatomy, identification of prostate lesions on MRI and their implications (Fig. 1)

Cumulative link mixed models via Laplace approximation were utilized to analyze questions with ratings (rating scale of 1-5) as outcomes

Generalized linear mixed-effects models were used for dichotomous responses

Statistical models were adjusted for age and race/ethnicity
Figure 1: Timeline of Radiologist Consultation

- **Prostate MRI**
  - Read by Radiologist

- **Radiologist Consultation**
  - 5-10 minutes
  - Virtual or in-Person

- **Pre-Survey**
  - Pre-procedure Holding Area

- **Post-Survey**
  - Pre-procedure Holding Area

- **Prostate Biopsy**

- **Discharge**
Results

• 25 patients analyzed

• Pre-Intervention:
  o All patients had previously had a prostate MRI, either once (n=15, 60%) or more than once (n=10, 40%), however majority had never discussed the results of their MRI with a radiologist (n=19, 76%)
  o Speaking with a radiologist prior to prostate biopsy significantly decreased the level of anxiety (OR 0.07, 95% CI 0.01 – 0.42, p=.003)

• Post-Intervention:
  o Nearly all patients reported satisfaction with the radiologist consultation, with 23 patients (96%) stating that it was very helpful, and all patients stating they would like the option to discuss results of their prostate imaging with a radiologist in the future
  o Nearly all patients stated they were likely to return to our department knowing the availability to speak to a radiologist about their MRI was an option (n=21, 88%)
  o A trend towards improved understanding of the role of the radiologist and prostate MRI was observed post-consultation, though statistically insignificant (p=0.134 and p=0.2, respectively)

• When comparing the survey outcomes pre- and post-consultation and controlling for age and race/ethnicity, radiology consultation had a statistically significant positive effect on patient’s understanding of prostate cancer with patients reporting improved/higher level of understanding (p=.04)

• Most patients reported preference for discussing imaging results with a radiologist or both the radiologist and referrer (n=21, 88%), however the intervention did not have a statistically significant impact on patients’ preference (p=0.1)
Conclusions

Our study sought to understand the effects of radiology consultation. We learned that the intervention improved quality of care by improving patient’s understanding of their illness and by lowering patient anxiety prior to image-guided biopsy.

While our study had limited sample size, the findings are supportive of action in favor of implementation of this program, particularly given minimal time requirements and virtual capabilities.
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