

**Use of images in a surgery consultation. Will it improve the communication?**

R. Vilallonga<sup>1</sup>, J.M. Fort<sup>1</sup>, N. Iordache<sup>2</sup>, M. Armengol<sup>1</sup>, X. Clèries<sup>3</sup>, M. Solà<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Endocrine, metabolic and bariatric Unit. General Surgery Department, Universitary Hospital Vall d'Hebron, Barcelona, Spain

<sup>2</sup>Department of Surgery, "Sf. Ioan" Emergency Hospital, Bucharest, Romania

<sup>3</sup>Institut d'Estudis de la Salut, Barcelona, Spain

**Abstract**

*Introduction:* The interviews and interactions with patients are part of everyday health care provider. However, there is sometimes a difficulty in communication, linked to several factors. For this reason, the use of images to illustrate the medical conditions in the outpatient clinic can improve patient communication. We report our initial experience with the use of images to manage the quality of care to surgical patients.

*Methodology:* He used a computer to show pictures of the following conditions: surgery for an inguinal hernia, cholelithiasis, cholecystitis and the choledocholithiasis and finally thyroid pathology. Were randomized two groups of patients. Each of the affected patients in any stage of the disease, they explained their problems. In one of the groups also showed the patient was using the current image and continued to give appropriate explanations related to pathology. Thereafter, patients in both groups filled in an anonymous questionnaire in which they responded to what degree it was considered useful this methodology, and degree of satisfaction received outpatient treatment with or without the deployment of images by computer. We have analyzed the average time expected and made a visit.

*Results:* 187 patients will be visited in the consultations over a period of 8 months. In 83 patients have been using images to give the explanations in external consultations. Of these, 24 patients suffering from thyroid, 24 hernias or incisional hernias and 35 patients with biliary tract pathology. Patients in the group were shown images of conditions have responded mostly be very satisfied with the use of images while the explanations are given on the patient's illness. Also, over 80% of patients report being satisfied with this system. The visiting time was not lengthened.

*Discussion:* Despite the existence of different variables that can influence patient satisfaction, use of images to illustrate surgical diseases to patients improves communication and flow of the explanations of the physician.

*Conclusions:* The relationship doctor-patient communication is the key event in an outpatient setting. It determines a good overall result of the clinical interview. The use of images in an outpatient improves communication between patients and doctors. Moreover, the degree of satisfaction is high and the degree of understanding of the disease. It seems useful to incorporate in our outpatient clinic.

**Key words:** communication skills, surgery, evaluation, imaging, outpatient clinic

Corresponding author: Ramon Vilallonga, MD

General Surgery Department, Universitary Hospital Vall d'Hebron

Passeig de la Vall d'Hebron, 119-129

08035 Barcelona, Spain

E-mail: vilallongapuy@hotmail.com