

THE ROLE OF AUDIOVISUAL AIDS IN CONSENTING PATIENTS FOR UROGYNAECOLOGICAL SURGERY

Hypothesis / aims of study

Patients are undergoing increasingly complex operations and it is important for patients to fully understand the nature and risks of their procedure. Both the General Medical Council (GMC) and Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) have emphasised the importance of obtaining informed consent and recognise that there are a variety of methods in order to relay this information ^(i, ii). Visual aids have been shown to be an effective method of communication to aid patient decision making ⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾.

The study uses patient questionnaires to determine the value of using video as a means to communicate and share information with patients. Furthermore it assesses the role of video in aiding decision making and consent in urogynaecological surgery.

Study design, materials and methods

All patients requiring urogynaecological surgery in Weston General Surgery between November 2003 and December 2008 were offered a video of their proposed operative procedure to watch at home prior to their decision and consent. The patients were then sent the questionnaire which assessed how the video aided their understanding of their procedure.

Results

96 questionnaires were sent to patients and 71 forms were returned and analysed, a yield of 74%. 83% of these women reported that the video helped their understanding of the method of the procedure and 67% felt it increased their understanding of the purpose of the procedure. 74% of the women felt their decision to consent to the surgery had been enforced by watching the video and 83% were glad they had watched the video. 75% of patients would take a similar opportunity if they required a further surgical procedure and 73% would recommend it to other women.

Interpretation of results

Obtaining valid consent from patients is an important legal and ethical issue. This study shows that watching a video of the proposed procedure significantly increased their understanding of the method and purpose of their operation.

Concluding message

It is clear that although a video may not appeal to all patients, it has a legitimate role in complimenting verbal and written counselling for an operation.

References

1. Consent: patients and doctors making decisions together, General Medical Council
2. Obtaining valid consent, Clinical Governance Advice No.6, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
3. Decision aids for people facing health treatment or screening decisions, The Cochrane Collaboration, Cochrane reviews. Accessed from <http://www.cochrane.org/reviews/en/ab001431.html> 22nd May 2009.

<i>Specify source of funding or grant</i>	Weston Area NHS Trust
<i>Is this a clinical trial?</i>	No
<i>What were the subjects in the study?</i>	HUMAN
<i>Was this study approved by an ethics committee?</i>	No
<i>This study did not require ethics committee approval because</i>	Patient permission was acquired during clinic appointment for their participation in the audit
<i>Was the Declaration of Helsinki followed?</i>	Yes
<i>Was informed consent obtained from the patients?</i>	Yes