Education in shared decision making

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Abstract

Introduction

Shared decision making in healthcare is important. Education in shared decision making is required to ensure that healthcare professionals are equipped so that they can effectively share decisions with patients. Online learning may be one method of doing this. Online learning resources allow large numbers of users to access clinical content at a time and place that is convenient for them.

Methods

BMJ Learning is the online learning website of BMJ. BMJ Learning recently published a module on shared decision making. We evaluated the module by looking at how popular the module was, by examining the feedback that we received on the module and by looking at what percentage of users who started the module completed it. We analysed the feedback from a qualitative perspective.

Results

A total of 748 users started the module and 586 completed it. This gives a completion rate of 78%. The mean completion rate of all modules on the site is 83%. Feedback to the resource was mixed. 47 users described the resource as useful, good or excellent. 10 described it as interesting and 3 said that the content related to their learning needs. 10 users left negative comments.

Conclusions

Shared decision making is clearly a learning need amongst healthcare professionals and many users feel that an online learning module in this format is an effective means of satisfying this need.

Keywords: e-learning, shared decision making
Introduction

Shared decision making in healthcare is important. (Barry and Edgman-Levitan 2012) Education in shared decision making is required to ensure that healthcare professionals are equipped so that they can effectively share decisions with patients. (Légaré et al 2012) The challenge is to deliver education in shared decision making to large numbers of learners of all types so that shared decision making will become the norm in healthcare provision.

Online learning may be one method of doing this. Online learning resources allow large numbers of users to access clinical content at a time and place that is convenient for them. However to our knowledge this method has not until now been used as a means of healthcare professional education in shared decision making.

Methods

BMJ Learning is the online learning website of BMJ. It produces online learning modules designed to help healthcare professionals learn about clinical and non-clinical topics. Until now its main focus has been on clinical topics in primary and secondary care. (Walsh et al 2007) BMJ Learning recently published a module on shared decision making. The goals of the module were to help healthcare professionals learn what shared decision making involves, what are the requirements for effective shared decision making, what supporting tools and techniques are available and how best to employ them, and also the barriers to effective shared decision making. The format of the module was an audio interview. The senior editor of BMJ's health team (a non-clinician) interviewed a clinical specialist on the subject. The module utilized hypothetical clinical scenarios to suggest how best to perform decision-support counseling.

We evaluated the module by looking at how popular the module was, by examining the feedback that we received on the module and by looking at what percentage of users who started the module completed it. We analysed the feedback from a qualitative perspective.

Results

A total of 748 users started the module and 586 completed it. This gives a completion rate of 78%. The mean completion rate of all modules on the site is 83%. Hospital doctors were the biggest single user group who completed the module (63% of users were in this category). GPs and GP trainees also completed the module (12% of users were in this category). The remaining users were made up of nurses, allied healthcare professionals and students. 84 users left feedback on the resource. Feedback to the resource was mixed. 47 users described the resource as useful, good or excellent. 10 described it as interesting and 3 said that the content related to their learning needs. 15 users had suggestions regarding how the module could be improved. Of these, four users suggested that it would have been useful to see some of the patient decision aids; one user asked for more secondary care scenarios; 6 users suggested that video or multimedia content would have been better than audio; 2 users asked for more interactive or question based sections; one user asked for more content; and one user asked for more input from the patient perspective. 10 users left negative comments. Of these, 2 users said that much of the content was jargon; 4 users said that the content was monotonous to listen to; one user said that the content was very basic and general with little practical usefulness; one comment was incomprehensible; and one comment could not be categorised.
Conclusions

We feel that a number of conclusions can be drawn from this analysis. Shared decision making is clearly a learning need amongst healthcare professionals and some feel that an online learning module in this format is an effective means of satisfying this need. However many felt that interactivity, multimedia, scenarios, and more engaging content with practical examples of how patient-decision aids work would have been better. We plan to take this into account in future editorial strategic planning.

Take Home Messages

Shared decision making is an important learning need amongst healthcare professionals.

Online learning is a feasible way of meeting this need.

Notes On Contributors

Dr Kieran Walsh is Clinical Director of Clinical Improvement at BMJ.

Dr Omar Aboshady is a doctor at the Faculty of Medicine, Menoufia University, Shebin El-Kom, Menoufia, Egypt

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Appendices

None

Declarations

The author has declared that there are no conflicts of interest.

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