



Good Communication Helps Improve Heart Patient Outcomes



New research findings support evidence showing that effective patient-physician communication has a positive effect on the patient's health. In a survey of 6,810 patients with atherosclerosis, those who reported good communication with their healthcare providers were less likely to use the emergency room and more likely to comply with their treatment plans. The study is presented at the American Heart Association's Quality of Care and Outcomes Research Scientific Sessions 2017.

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In the survey, participants were asked questions such as "How often did your healthcare providers show respect for what you had to say?" and "How often did healthcare providers spend enough time with you?" Researchers reported these key findings:

- Patients who said they communicated effectively with their healthcare providers were 52 percent more likely to report the use of prescribed cholesterol-lowering statin drugs and 26 percent more likely to report taking aspirin.
- Patients with good provider communication were 41 percent less likely to go to the emergency room.
- In comparison, those who reported poor communication with their healthcare providers were twice as likely to report poorer outcomes and spent \$1,243 more in healthcare costs.

"A patient's beliefs about their illness, their perception of the healthcare system, the extent to which a physician fulfills the patient's requests and other obstacles can make it a challenge for patients and providers to connect," said lead study author Victor M. Okunrintemi, MD, MPH, a researcher at Baptist Health South Florida in Miami.

The doctor went on to say that it's difficult to say with certainty how communication exactly influences health outcomes. It could be that, through optimal communication, patients and their healthcare providers gain a better understanding of the medical condition. Further, effective patient-provider communication can help to build trust and confidence, motivate patients and promote adherence to medication "which could improve patients' health status while reducing the need for unnecessary health resource utilisation which can lower healthcare expenditures," Dr. Okunrintemi added.

Source: [American Heart Association](#)

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