



Patients Recording Surgery: Transparency or Medical Trainwreck?



StatNews talks about the recent debate in healthcare over whether patients should be allowed to record their surgical procedures.

Jennifer Kritz, spokesperson for Boston's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center communicates that the number of patients who wish to record their surgeries and the stages of care such as doctor instructions and physical therapy is on the rise.

Those who support this practice do so because they believe it brings greater transparency and accountability and increases patient safety. Those who oppose the practice do so out of concern that it will harm patient-provider relationships and can also increase legal risk.

Those against may not be wrong actually. In a recent incident of a recorded procedure, a patient in Virginia was awarded \$500,000 because he accidentally recorded his doctors insulting him while he was unconscious and also conspiring to misdiagnose him.

Most states prohibit recording of such procedures without the consent of all involved parties. But many are now exploring the idea. Since medical errors are the third-leading cause of death, it might not be such a bad thing after all.

However, the Massachusetts Medical Society believes that recording can create a sense of distrust between doctor and patient, not to mention the fact that videographer interference may not be a good idea for the procedure itself.

On the other hand, Richard Crober, Assistant Vice President of CRICO Strategies feels that video recordings could help hospitals in lawsuits since the videos could provide evidence of what actually happened. He also adds that hospitals could use these videos to learn from their mistakes or even determine why infection rates are lower with one surgeon as compared to the other.

Dr. Teodor Gratcharov, a Canadian surgeon has designed a surgical black box that not only records audio and video but also other medial data points during a surgery. This could be a very useful tool as long as it is not used to blame and shame staff, cautions Grantcharov.

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