

Videos Help Heart Failure Patients Change Behaviour



Wellflix, a healthcare media start-up, has developed a new idea of a parting gift at discharge for congestive heart failure (CHF) patients. It is a DVD that would help patients understand their care plan and would show them what they need to do to change their behaviour and avoid readmission. It will also help hospitals reduce their readmission rates for heart failure.

CHF is the number one cause of hospitalisation for adults over 65. It is a top priority for hospitals to reduce their 30-day readmission rates.

The company has developed a series of videos that are geared towards helping patients improve adherence. The videos emphasise visual rather than oral or written instructions. The approach is based on Dr. Albert Bandura's work that focuses on social learning theory.

The CEO of Wellflix Jon Winder explains that the DVDs are being beta tested in two hospital systems - one in North Carolina and one in Massachusetts. The company has also been able to obtain funding for the commercial roll out of the heart failure videos within the next three to six months.

Wellflix has developed four sets of videos on managing congestive heart failure. The videos are geared to African-American and Caucasian men and women and have been designed keeping in mind factors such as language, ethnicity and age. The theory behind the series is that people are more likely to watch videos that depict people like themselves. The company plans to add more disease states such as COPD, diabetes and wound care.

Peter Orton, a co-founder and director of Wellflix, who also consults for the Centers for Disease Control on health communication and delivery, authored a paper that helps explain the company's approach. "Observing people similar to oneself successfully perform a skill typically raises the observers' self-efficacy that they themselves also have the capabilities to master comparable activities. If someone 'like them' can do it, then they too can achieve the skill they have observed."

The DVDs can be viewed either on a computer or a DVD player. They can also be viewed through an online portal. Ideally, patients are expected to be helped by their caregivers in setting up and viewing the videos. One of the hospitals has already tried showing part of the video to the patients before they're discharged.

Winder also points out that it is often difficult for patients to absorb all the information at discharge. Information overload can often lead to stress and depression. However, if patients had visual tools, would be much easier for them to understand the guidelines and to change their behaviour so as to ensure that it has a positive effect on the patient's health.

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