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Title

Conceptualizing a New Definition of Patient Burden

Priority 1 (Research Category)

Systematic review, meta-analysis, or scoping review

Presenters

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Abstract

Context: Gaining insights into patient burden is integral to establishing appropriate treatment plans and addressing patient concerns and limitations. However, current literature defines patient burden in various ways and fails to provide a comprehensive definition of burden. Current patient burden definitions have conceptual gaps that omit burden elements that are critical to understanding the complete experiences of patients seeking voluntary, episodic care. Gaining insight into the burdens experienced by patients engaged in voluntary, episodic care could improve patient satisfaction and the quality of healthcare encounters. Objective: To apply concepts from caregiver, surrogate, communicative, and treatment burden definitions, minimally disruptive medicine, and the theory of planned behavior to develop a definition of patient burden resulting from voluntary, episodic medical encounters. Study Design: Conceptualization paper requiring a critical review and explicate existing patient burden literature to formulate a new patient burden definition focusing on patients undergoing voluntary, episodic medical encounters. Results: The new, proposed patient burden definition is (1) the perceived negative outcomes of a medical encounter; (2) resulting from an increased healthcare workload and diminished capacity to manage the negative outcomes; (3) that manifest emotionally, relationally, physically, communicatively, and systemically. Conclusions: The new definition facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the burdens experienced during a voluntary, episodic medical encounters. Further, it ensures that the medical staff can apply appropriate care and support to patients. The new definition enhances our ability to improve doctor-patient interactions; recognize and minimize emotional, relational, physical, and systemic burden experienced by patients; and embrace minimally disruptive, patient-centered healthcare strategies.