

Improving Electronic Health Record Patient Education Materials

Principal Investigator:	Shoemaker, Sarah J., Pharm.D, Ph.D.
Organization:	Abt Associates, Inc.
Contract Number:	290-09-00012I-4
Project Period:	July 2010 – July 2013
AHRQ Funding Amount:	\$524,945
Summary Status as of:	December 2010

Target Population: Low Literacy

Summary: Health literacy refers to an individual's ability to read, understand, and use health care information to make decisions about treatment. An estimated 90 million people in the United States have limited health literacy. While advances in health information technology have the potential to improve accuracy and efficiency in health care, a low level of patient health literacy can negatively impact the communication between physician and patient, resulting in substandard care. Therefore, to successfully empower patients to actively participate in their care, health literacy must be a consideration in the design of health information or patient educational materials.

Abt Associates is leading a study to develop a rating system to assess whether patient education materials delivered by electronic health records (EHRs) are written in a way that is sufficiently understandable for patients to make relevant decisions and take action. An environmental scan will serve to compile a list of existing rating systems and potentially relevant usability scales, as well as identify relevant domains. A Technical Expert Panel (TEP) will be established as a resource for expertise and guidance into the development of the Health Information Rating System (HIRS).

Project Objectives:

- Develop a scale to rate the understandability and actionability of health information or patient education materials provided via EHRs. **(Ongoing)**
- Complete an environmental scan and develop an inventory of publicly available patient education materials that rate well on the new scale. **(Upcoming)**
- Review current EHR patient education capabilities and features. **(Upcoming)**
- Educate EHR vendors and users about the need for and availability of appropriate education materials. **(Upcoming)**

2010 Activities: In the six months between the project kick-off and the end of 2010, the focus of activities has been on drafting the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance plan, developing and revising the HIRS Plan, and engaging the TEP. Planning for the review of EHR patient education capabilities has also begun. A date for the first TEP meeting is scheduled for January 2011. The revised HIRS plan includes a protocol for how best to engage the TEP at the first meeting, particularly in regards to operationalizing the domains of understandability and actionability, which will affect the design of the HIRS and most importantly, consumer testing. Once the operationalizations for the domains are finalized, the OMB protocol package can be submitted for consideration.

Preliminary Impact and Findings: The project has no findings to date.

Strategic Goal: Develop and disseminate health IT evidence and evidence-based tools to support patient-centered care, the coordination of care across transitions in care settings, and the use of electronic exchange of health information to improve quality of care.

Business Goal: Knowledge Creation