The OpenNotes Patient Feedback Tool: What Patients Say about Reading Notes

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Research Objectives

- OpenNotes is a national initiative that invites patients to read their clinicians’ visit notes online.
- Starting with 20,000 patients, about 8 million patients have online access to notes today.
- Patients are increasingly seeking their health data, but there are few mechanisms for them to provide feedback on documentation errors.
- We developed a patient feedback tool to learn more about patient experiences with reading their visit notes.

Study Design

- All (6225) patients with portal access seen by 41 participating providers in our hospital-based primary care clinic during April-Aug 2014
- A “MyFeedback” link at the end of the note led to a 9-item survey
- Two team members coded the qualitative responses (kappa 0.74) to:
  - “What do you like about reading or providing feedback on your note?”
  - We compared feedback tool reporting rates to our ambulatory online adverse event reporting system.

OpenNotes Patient Feedback Tool

I. CONFIRM AND REMEMBER NEXT STEPS

- Sometimes when white-coat syndrome where I am a little nervous in the doctor’s office and then cannot remember what was said. Reading the notes after my visits confirms what I heard.

II. QUICKER ACCESS/RESULTS

- I like knowing what the results of my tests mean. The records (laboratory results) show the numbers but the notes provide the interpretation in regards to my personal health status.

III. PARTNERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

- I like the ability to see the doctor’s thought process. The more open communication there is, the better care, so as an active participant, I have access to.

IV. ACCURACY AND MISTAKES

- “Seeing my notes allows me to see how well we are communicating my issues, which leads to how well my doctors are hearing and documenting my issues. It also allows me to catch errors.”

V. SHARING INFORMATION WITH CAREGIVERS

- “It’s very immediate. And I can make my own comment. Open communication better.”

VI. POSITIVE EMOTIONS

- “The notes give me a step by step feedback. It’s like having the visit all over again.”

VII. ENHANCED COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

- “The notes give me a step by step feedback. It’s like having the visit all over again.”

VIII. IMPORTANCE OF FEEDBACK

- “Having the opportunity to provide feedback is important to moving the program forward and helps stimulate innovation.

Themes:

- “Having the opportunity to provide feedback is important to moving the program forward and helps stimulate innovation.

Principal Findings

- Reported the tool was somewhat (16.2%) or very (82.3%) valuable
- [179 reports]
- Included non-mandatory qualitative responses to:
  - “What do you like about reading or providing feedback on your note?”
  - Which we analyzed thematically

OpenNotes Feedback Tool vs. Ambulatory Adverse Event Reporting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OpenNotes Patient Feedback Tool n=6225 patients</th>
<th>Adverse Event Reporting System* n=14,000 patients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total reports</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports/patient</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports/read note</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential safety concerns/visit**</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.12%</td>
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</tbody>
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*Reports in same primary care clinic in same year (FY15)
**10,039 PatientSite user visits with participating providers during feedback tool pilot; 9,649 annual visits in FY15

Conclusions and Policy Relevance

- Nearly all patients and their informal caregivers found the feedback tool valuable, enabling FY9 engagement in ambulatory care
- What patients/caregivers liked about reading open notes and the feedback tool has safety implications:
  - Better remembering next steps
  - Timely result notification
  - Patient activation
  - Identification of documentation errors
- An OpenNotes feedback tool can:
  - Engage patients and families
  - Enhance communication and safety partnerships between patients and providers
  - Inform organizations of improvement opportunities
  - Increase ambulatory reporting

Now and Looking Ahead...

- OpenNotes and the feedback tool as a “visit extender”
- Implications for patient accountability
- Mechanism for bidirectional communication

Research Funder

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For more information, contact:
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To learn more, please visit our website www.opennotes.org