



COVID-19: KEEPING UP WITH A MOVING TARGET

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Learning Objectives

- Describe some of the challenges to effective communication between patient, family/caregivers, and clinicians during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Discuss communication strategies that been employed during the COVID-19 pandemic.






Thank You

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Challenges to Effective Communication in Hospital Healthcare

- COVID-19 pandemic is causing challenges to effective communication that must be dealt with intentionally
 - Patient
 - Families/caregivers
 - Healthcare team
- This presentation will deal with inpatient Issues
 - Telehealth, case management, and outpatient care pose specific challenges that the speaker has little experience with





Healthcare Changes During Pandemic

- Universal masking
- Social distancing
 - Fear/avoidance
- Airborne and contact PPE
 - PAPR hoods cause wind tunnel that decreases hearing
 - Facemasks hide half of face
 - Plastic half masks hide face and muffle voice
- Hospital visitors highly restricted
- Overburdened healthcare system
 - Teams stretched thin
 - Long hours and exhaustion
 - Teams pulling from motley specialties, don't know one another





Barrier: PAPRs, Masks and Shields

Challenges

- PAPR decreases hearing
- Facial covering
 - Perceived empathy
 - Facial Expression
 - Emotional cues
 - Out of breath, sighs
- Vocal modulation
 - Think you are yelling
 - No subtlety, jarring
 - Frustration

Opportunities

- Facesheet on introduction
- Picture of self on person
- Acknowledge situation
- Enunciation
- Increase Volume
- Validate
- Respect
- Supportive statements





Barrier: Family/Caregiver Presence

Challenges

- No visitors in hospital
- Goals of Care Convos
 - Cannot see patient status
 - Impaired grief, sudden loss
- Transitional care
 - Complex discharges
 - Vulnerable to poor coordin.
- Caregiver burden
- Baseline social isolation

Opportunities

- Virtual Communication
- Scheduled meetings daily
 - Updates
 - Patient video conference
 - Even with poor mental status
- Designate point of contact
- Call family during rounds
- Emotional support





Special Note: Patient Demographics

Vast disparities in COVID-19 population

- Latinx
- Black
- Native American, Hawaiian and Alaskan Natives

- Older ages
- Prison population
- Pre-existing health conditions
 - Psychiatric illness and medical comorbidities





Barrier: High Acuity

Challenges

- Altered mental status (AMS)
- Sedation, paralytics
- Delirium
- Dementia, other baselines
- Video interpreter not very effective with AMS
- Inability to ambulate outside of room

Opportunities

- Speak to patient
- Narrate all care
- Trauma-informed care
- Delirium precautions
 - Reduce agents (Beer's list)
 - Day night cycle
 - Decrease restraints
 - Decrease procedures
 - Early mobilization





Barrier: Overburdened Healthcare System

Challenge

- Practicing out of specialty
- High acuity
- Long hours, exhaustion
- PPE and distancing
- BURNOUT

Opportunity

- Just in time education
- Set protocols/standards
- Learn common language
- Virtual learning
- Foster camaraderie
- Respect and patience
- Resilience
- Multidisciplinary inclusion





To submit your own question, please email QA@dkbmed.com





All my patient's family is in another country. What can I do to provide better communication?





My facility does not have access to technology that can allow for video conferencing. What can I do to promote effective communication?



Resources

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