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Teach-Back Method: Improving Health Outcomes
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Purpose
To answer the Clinical PICO question:
For patients managing chronic disease, how does the implementation of the teach-back method compared to usual standard of care affect health outcomes?
By implementing the teach-back method, we will improve the management of chronic disease in the primary care setting.

Background
- Chronic diseases account for almost two-thirds of deaths worldwide: most from complications related to cardiovascular, cancer, diabetes and respiratory conditions.
- Patients must understand and effectively manage their own care.
- Patients now have less face-to-face time with their providers.

Evidence Synthesis
- Using the teach-back method in health education most often resulted in patients’ improved self-efficacy
- Most significant improvements with simple self-management tasks, such as inhaler use or daily weights
- Health promotion interventions regularly report internal validity
- Assessment of ‘teach-back’ would be increased if clinical trials were reported in a uniform way, with longer follow-up periods

Evidence Appraisal
- Literature review identified systematic reviews and qualitative studies limited to teach-back, health literacy and health outcomes that were full text, English, and published in the past 7 years
- Overall, the teach-back method showed positive effects, but not always statistically significant
- Exceptions: Improved outcomes in disease-specific knowledge, adherence, & self-efficacy

Translation to Practice
- Implement teach-back method with the following goals in understanding:
  1) the diagnosis or health problem for which they need care,
  2) the name/type/general nature of the treatment, service or procedure,
  3) potential problems to watch for and what to do if they occur.

- Providers should use plain language to communicate clearly and limit the volume of information to two or three key concepts.

Proposed Evaluation
- Provider education with the use of Ask-Me-3 program materials or EDUCATE model to provide recommendations for specific common situations
- Documentation, such as a short 3-question survey, to be completed at the end of each office visit to assess effective communication

Conclusion
- Teach-back method: personalized educational communication between provider and patient
- Evidence suggests improved understanding and maximize adherence and self-care skills
- Teach-back should be utilized with all patients, but most especially those with low literacy

References