

MEDICATION DELIVERY CONFIRMATION TO AMBULATORY PATIENTS BY INSTANT MESSAGING APP

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BACKGROUND AND IMPORTANCE

Faced with the lockdown caused by Covid-19 since March 2020, we have been reorganizing the external patients department to get medicines to our patients. But, how do we notify them that their medication is on its way? How do they send us the delivery confirmation, without wasting a lot of time and protecting their data online?

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Analyze effectiveness of the use of a professional instant messaging application to confirm the medication delivery to our patients or to their family members, always ensuring the protection of their data.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A prospective study which includes all patients that medication was sent to. This study was done with Whatsapp Business[®] between July and September 2020. All patients gave us prior verbal consent to participate in this study.

Data collected: number of shipments, age, sex and number of patients, number and type of sent messages with the app, number of confirmation or incident responses by patients with the app and time saved compared with phone calls.

RESULTS

A total of 190 medication shipment were made to 98 patients (60% men) with a median age of 57 (32-89).

354 instant messages were sent to 79 patients (80.6%), which 177(50%) were shipment notifications and 177(50%) were a simple yes/no question about to confirm the correct pickup. Referring to these last 177 messages, we received 122 replies from 63 patients (64.3%), of which 119(94.3%) were correct delivery confirmations and 3(5.7%) were incidents (which were resolved as soon as possible).

The system warned us that 19(19.4%) patients had not received the messages because neither they nor their family members had the necessary app installed on their mobile phones.

Assuming an average of 3 minutes per each phone call to confirm delivery of medication, we have saved 357 minutes (3 x 119 confirmation responses) thanks to instant messages.

CONCLUSION AND RELEVANCE

This method of instant messaging online is a fast, free and secure way to notify and confirm the correct delivery of medication or to detect any delivery incident.

A possible limitation is that some elderly patients do not have this app installed on their mobile phones or they don't know how to use it.