

26364 - A SURVEY: TECHNOLOGY IN A PEDIATRIC DAY CARE SETTING

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INTRODUCTION: The public is increasingly being exposed to advanced information and communication technology (ICT) in their everyday activities. We hypothesized that the introduction of advanced ICT in a pediatric day care hospital setting would be acceptable to parents and directly related to their comfort with technology.

METHODS: After ethics committee approval, surveys were distributed to consecutive families arriving for day care procedures over a 26- day period. The survey asked the parents to indicate the extent they would favor or oppose three means of discussing the care of their child: face-to-face, Videophone, or a telephone. Parents were also asked to describe their interest in being able to book non-emergency hospital appointments online and receiving electronic media describing their child's surgery and postoperative management. All preferences were described using a five-point Likert scale. Access to computer resources, comfort with internet-based technology, and demographic information regarding patients and parents were described. All data are described as proportions or medians (range). Demographic characteristics were compared with the Chi-square analysis. Preferences were correlated using the Spearman's rho. Reliability and content validity were accounted for in the survey design.

RESULTS: A total of 453 surveys (84 % response rate) were returned. The population surveyed was technologically sophisticated as 91% had access to a computer, 92% had access to a CD-ROM and a DVD player, 95% had access to the Internet, over 90% of parents were comfortable using the Internet and e-mail and 70% did their banking online. Many parents (42%) had at least a university education and 63% had a family income greater than \$50,000 per year. Parents favored face-to-face interaction (98%) over videophone (35%) and telephone interviews (37%). Computer availability ($p=0.001$) and online banking ($p=0.011$) were the only variables that predicted those parents who were in favor of using videophone technology. Interest in videophone technology was inversely correlated with preference for face-to-face interviews and positively correlated with interest in telephone interviews and use of other technology in hospital (Table 1). Parents were in favor of instructional electronic media (80%) and booking appointments online (61%).

DISCUSSION: Our parent population is technologically advanced, educated and has a high standard of living. Other than online banking, these factors are not associated with favoring advanced communication technologies over simple face-to-face interaction. An earlier pilot study involving 25 families piloting a videophone found 87% of the parents and 83% of health care workers were neutral to strongly in favor of promoting this technology as a means of postoperative communication . It appears that the public is prepared to receive technology-based ancillary information about their child's surgery but they prefer face-to-face interaction with health care workers.

REFERENCES: CanJ Anesth 2005;52;A104

TABLE 1. Correlation of Preference for Videophone Interview and Other Technologies

	Face-to-Face Interview	Telephone Interview	Online Appointments	Instructional Media
Videophone Interview	-0.16 (p=0.01)	0.40 (p=0.01)	0.28 (p=0.01)	0.24 (p=0.01)