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The CUA exists to promote the highest standard of urologic care for Canadians and to advance the art and science of urology.

Patient information resources: Bridging the communication gaps

Accurate and readable patient information materials play a crucial role in healthcare. They serve as vital tools for bridging communication gaps, ensuring information about diagnoses, treatment options, and care plans is accessible and comprehensible.

We are all aware of the diversity of medical/scientific literacy of our patients, but this can be difficult to assess and appreciate in the moment during our (often) hectic clinic interactions.¹ By presenting medical information in a clear, straightforward manner, enduring material, like our Canadian Urological Association (CUA) patient information brochures, empower patients and their families to make informed decisions about their healthcare. This empowerment is particularly important in complex cases, where stakes are high and choices may have significant implications for quality of life. Furthermore, well-designed patient information brochures can enhance patient satisfaction, improve adherence to treatment plans, and ultimately contribute to better outcomes. Therefore, investing in the development of accurate and reader-friendly materials is not just beneficial but essential for fostering an informed, engaged, and proactive patient population.²

For over two decades, the CUA Patient Information Committee (PIC) has created and disseminated (free of charge) patient brochures to most of our practices across the country; in the last year alone, over 200 000 brochures were delivered. In the current healthcare environment, where information is abundant yet often overwhelming, providing resources that are readable, accurate, and reflect the specific needs of diverse populations has never been more critical.³ The CUA's commitment to this foundation ensures that patients and family members are equipped with reliable knowledge to navigate their care journey, alongside their healthcare providers.

The last year has seen what might represent some disruptive technology with respect to these

endeavors. The advent of language learning models (LLMs) like ChatGPT is a significant leap forward in information technology. These models hold the potential to revolutionize patient education by providing instant, tailored responses to inquiries. Their capacity to digest vast amounts of medical literature and generate comprehensible content could support the goal of educating patients effectively; however, LLMs lack nuanced understanding and empathy. They operate on algorithms that cannot replace the insight from clinical content experts, delivering up-to-date, guideline-concordant information with the understanding of what our patients and family members need.

Our PIC members understand the delicate balance between leveraging technology and preserving the human touch in patient care. The committee has spent a considerable amount of time and resources updating content to maintain accuracy, ensuring congruence with the most recent CUA guidelines and best practice statements, while also improving readability so that the material is accessible to all, regardless of medical literacy level. As we move forward, our brochures will be further enhanced by linking the topics to videos being filmed and curated by the CUA Community Urology Committee. Yet, we are cautious to remind our patients that these resources are for educational purposes and should not supplant professional medical advice.

The CUA's commitment to excellence is evident in the work of PIC, as we strive to provide resources that not only inform but also uphold the standards of care that define our profession.

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