Discutons Santé   *Let's Discuss Health*
A website to help chronic disease patients and their providers engage in productive interactions

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Background

Effective communication between patients and healthcare providers (HCP) is the foundation of Wagner's *Chronic Care Model.*

Few self-learning educational websites focus on improving **both** patient and HCP communication. To our knowledge, none are available in French.

The aim of this project is to develop and validate a French language website intended to help patients and HCP engage in more productive interactions within the primary care (PC) context.

Methods

Phase 1
- Development of website materials. Patient training is based on Cegala's PACE model. HCP training is inspired both by the transtheoretical and health belief models.
- Many formats are combined: texts, figures, graphs, video and audio excerpts and interactive exercises.

Phase 2
- Construction of the website in collaboration with **Capsana**, a respected Quebec community organization specialized in the production of health education materials and websites.

Phase 3
- Validatation of patient and provider sections of the website in terms of content, relevance and usefulness, ease of use, and intention to recommend it by :
  1) observing a group of test users while they explored the website ;
  2) self administered individual questionnaires ;
  3) focus groups to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the website.
- Evaluation of three distinct methods to promote the visit of the website within PC practices:
  1) passive diffusion by a large poster in the waiting room;
  2) website visit recommendation given to patients b clinic receptionists
  3) website visit recommendation given to patients by HCP.

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Let's Discuss Health
is a free access website that offers …

Training for healthcare providers
- To quickly determine patients' stances regarding their health problems and treatments.
- To better adapt interventions to patients' level of understanding and motivation.
- To help patients develop their abilities to self-manage their health problems.

The training is accredited by *Médecins francophones du Canada*

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Tools for patients
- To arrive prepared for their appointments and effectively manage their health problems.
- **Simple and practical tips** to communicate effectively with health professionals.
- **A visit preparation guide** that also keeps records of previous appointments.
- **A health booklet** to enter important information such as medication list, past and current health problems, and family history.

Communication

at the heart of the patient-healthcare provider relationship

The objective of *Let's Discuss Health* is to promote effective communication between patients and HCP to improve the quality of interactions and help patients self-manage their conditions.

This collaborative approach is an important asset when facing the many challenges presented by the **treatment of chronic health problems**, especially when it comes to non-adherence.

The strength and originality of *Let's Discuss Health* lie in its practical content illustrating well established theoretical models in the domain of healthcare communication.

Let's Discuss Health encourages patients and HCP to form a cooperative partnership in which each plays their respective role.
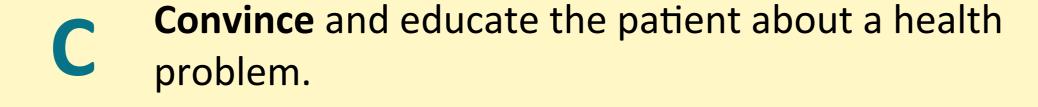
CASE training for healthcare providers

"Over the years, I've realised it is very useful to ask patients if the recommended treatment is suitable and if they have questions or concerns regarding the treatment."
Dr. Johanne Blais, Family Medicine Unit at the CHUQ

The training is comprised of three modules:

C **Convince** and educate the patient about a health problem.

A **Activate** the patient to implement a treatment and support the patient during its implementation.

S **Support and Empower** patient adherence to the agreed treatment.
E

Each module contains **several practical examples** and concludes with two **clinical case studies**, each accompanied by an analysis and a formative assessment.

4 key questions to explore in each module
1. Is the patient convinced he has the problem?
2. Is he aware of the severity of this problem?
3. Does he acknowledge the potential benefits of the treatment?
4. Does he believe he can follow the treatment?

PACE tools for patients

"My doctor really appreciated the fact that I brought my written observations about what factors worsen or alleviate my symptoms and when they subside."
Martine Lévesque, patient

PACE is an acronym used to refer to the skills patients are encouraged to develop to effectively communicate with professionals and to play a more active role in their health.

P **Prepare** for your appointments

A **Ask** about your health problem

C **Check** to make sure you understood

E **Express** any concerns

A visit preparation guide helps patients to:
- Make a list of the various topics they want to discuss.
- Think about their symptoms and describe them more accurately.
- Arrange the topics in order of importance.
- List of all their medications and readings (e.g. blood sugar, blood pressure).

The PACE approach is adapted from the *Talking Health Together*[TM] program, itself based on studies conducted by Donald J. Cegala, Ph.D., of Ohio State University.

Findings

Validation data reveal that website presentation and content are relevant, useful and that the users intend to recommend it's use. Patients suggested adding more instructions to improve navigation. Providers wished a greater number of clinical cases to illustrate the theoretical principles presented.

Discussion

This is the first french language website aiming to simultaneously improve both patients and providers' communication in the PC context. We are planning a randomized trial to evaluate the impact of completing training by patients and providers on patient recall, adherence and clinical outcomes.

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