

Cómo Hablar Con Su Doctor: Adaptation of a Patient Engagement Tool



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BACKGROUND

Cómo Hablar Con Su Doctor: El Manual or How to Talk to Your Doctor HANdbook [HTTTYD(S)], was designed to improve patient-provider communication among Spanish speakers. Among all minority groups studied in the most recent National Assessment of Adult Literacy, Hispanic adults had lower health literacy than adults in any other racial/ethnic group, with 41% demonstrating below basic health literacy.¹ Because health literacy barriers are associated with health disparities, and because minority populations suffer disparately from a number of chronic diseases, HTTTYD(S) presents a needed opportunity to intervene with Spanish speakers to improve health literacy.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Center for Health Literacy (UAMS CHL), with support from the UAMS Center for Distance Health/ANGELS (UAMS CDH), adapted the (English) How to Talk to Your Doctor HANdbook for Spanish speakers. HTTTYD(S) content aligns with its English language counterpart in that it teaches using one's hand as a visual aid to convey important concepts. Knowing that some patients struggle with even the easiest-to-read materials, this strategy decreases dependence on reading skills.

METHODS

A direct translation to Spanish from the original English content was not possible due to the mnemonics used. Further review by cultural experts at UAMS CDH indicated that in order to be most relevant to Spanish speakers, some content would need to be added. With assistance from those cultural representatives and qualified medical translators, the adaptation was completed to include the desired additional content and a desirable reading level of 5th grade.

UAMS CHL developed complementary facilitator guides and pre- and post-class evaluation questions for those administering group sessions in Spanish. HTTTYD(S) has been shared with patients and community members in a free primary care clinic that serves primarily low income patients; at the local Mexican consulate; and at an array of churches, community organizations, and Head Start centers.



RESULTS

English Mnemonics Unfit for Spanish Language

3. Words

Repeat instructions and information back in your own Words. Decide how you will start the conversation with your doctor. Pick an example on the next page or write your own.



Issue: In English, we reminded learners that the number 3 looks like a "W" to help them remember the word "Words." There are few words in the Spanish language that begin with "W," and none were appropriate for use here.

4. FORms

Don't FORget to fill out FORMs completely. Ask for help if forms are hard to fill out. Take a list of things that may be in forms.



Write down the information you will need to fill out forms on the next page.

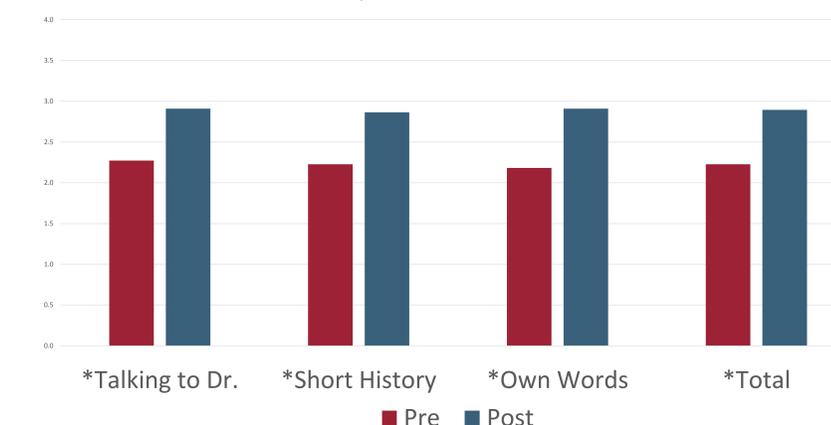
Issue: In English, we used the number 4 to help learners remember the word "Forms." The Spanish word for "Forms" ("Formularios") does not relate to "Cuatro" - the number 4 in Spanish.

OUTCOMES/IMPACT

Evaluation results from pre- and post-class questionnaires demonstrate statistically significant gains in participants' confidence in:

- 1) Preparing to talk to the doctor
- 2) Telling the doctor everything he or she needs to know in a short visit
- 3) Repeating back what the doctor says in their own words

Community partners report that the HANdbook provides important learning material for Spanish speakers and that its complementary facilitator resources are easy to use.



New Spanish Content for Added Cultural Relevance

3. Comunicación

Asegúrese de que usted y su doctor puedan entenderse el uno al otro.



3. La buena comunicación con su doctor es de grandísima importancia

- Antes de la cita, pregunte si su doctor habla su idioma o si hay intérprete.
- Algunos lugares, por ley, proveen servicios de intérprete.
- Al final de la cita, repita en sus propias palabras la información o las instrucciones de su médico.

Key messages include:

- Your healthcare conversation is often a "3-way" conversation between you, your doctor, and your interpreter
- Find out before your appointment if your clinic has interpreters available
- Ask for an interpreter when you need one

4. Pregunte las 4 qué

¿Qué es mi enfermedad?
¿Qué pruebas necesito?
¿Qué medicamentos necesito?
¿Qué debo hacer al llegar a casa?



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¿Qué es mi enfermedad?

¿Qué pruebas necesito?

¿Qué medicamentos necesito?

¿Qué debo hacer al llegar a casa?

Key messages include:

- Ask 4 questions before you leave the clinic:
- 1) What is the health problem I have?
 - 2) What tests will I have?
 - 3) What new meds will I take?
 - 4) What else can I do to take the best care of myself?

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Demand for health literacy interventions like this from within the developers' clinical enterprise continues to grow. Clinical service leaders from multiple specialties and the health system's Patient- and Family-Centered Care enterprise are considering opportunities to institutionalize this content throughout the UAMS health system. Implementation of HTTTYD(S) is straightforward and requires minimal investment. Any organization who wishes to use the HANdbooks may send a request to UAMS CHL. In most cases, permission to print can be granted. Access to training materials and implementation consultation from UAMS CHL are available on request.

REFERENCES

1. Kutner M, Greenberg E, Jin Y, & Paulsen, C. *The Health Literacy of America's Adults: Results from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy* (NCES 2006-483). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education: National Center for Education Statistics; 2006.

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