Picture-guided spiritual care that alleviates anxiety in mechanically ventilated patients

Technology #cu16041

Mechanically-ventilated intensive care unit (MV-ICU) patients often suffer from anxiety while hospitalized, and after recovery, can be left with long-term depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Their ability to communicate while in the ICU is limited, and visual systems have been developed to facilitate the understanding of physical conditions and medical preferences. These systems, however, have focused on physiological needs and have neglected spiritual matters. This technology is a picture card designed to systematically exchange information about spiritual wellbeing with MV-ICU or other non-vocal patients. By facilitating the understanding of spiritual preferences and (when requested) the organization of spiritual activities, it has shown promise in reducing patient anxiety, and may in turn reduce the stress that leads to depression and PTSD.

Visual communication card for ICU patients to alleviate immediate anxiety and long-term stress

Typically, chaplain services are introduced to the ICU with end-of-life care and thus play a limited role for patients who recover. Addressing the spiritual needs of a patient earlier in care, via the spiritual care communication card, can help reduce the probability of developing stress-related sequelae post-hospitalization. In a preliminary study, use of this picture-guided spiritual care card was found to reduce immediate anxiety by 31% and post-discharge stress by 64 points on a 100-mm visual-analog scale. With feasibility and clinical promise confirmed, the card will now be tested further in a planned multi-center randomized controlled trial.

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Applications:

- Physical or electronic spiritual care communication card for communication-challenged patients
- App for surveying and tracking population or community spiritual needs, e.g. patients following discharge, individuals seeking religious guidance, etc.
- Large-scale rapid assessment of spiritual needs, e.g. among victims of natural disasters in temporary shelters

Advantages:

- Improves patient quality of life during hospitalization and post-discharge
- May reduce psychiatric sequelae of ICU stays
- Can be used by individuals of varying cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds
- Simple to produce and distribute

Tech Ventures Reference: IR CU16041

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