Patients Accessing Laboratory Results via Patient Portal: What are the Risks?

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Agenda

- What are Patient Portals?
- Why Pathologists care
- Risks involved
- Study design
- Results
- Conclusion
What are patient portals?

- Web portals
  - Access to personal medical information
  - Medications
  - Problem list
  - Laboratory results
- 2-way communication
- Appointment scheduling
Here's a notice from your doctor

Welcome to the Family Physician Group's safe and secure portal.

You now have timely access to health information including a visit summary.

New Provider: The practice welcomes Dr. Anna Smith. Dr. Smith recently completed her residency at Johns Hopkins with a concentration in Pediatric medicine.

Flu Shots are available any time during our regular office hours.

Next appointment:
- Date: 04/23/2012
- Time: 3:30 PM

Don't Forget!
Why should pathologists care?

- Meaningful Use
  - Stage 1
  - Stage 2
- Core objectives
- Menu objectives
  - Access to Laboratory results
What are the risks?

- Psychological harm
- Sensitive results
- Regulatory concerns
- Usability
- Access issues
- Data validation
Our study design:

- PubMed
- Search terms: “patient portal” and “patient portals”
- 34 papers relevant to the topic
- All reviewed by two independent reviewers
- 10 articles remained after exclusion
  - Peer reviewed
  - Original data
- Survey Monkey
## Results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue addressed</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Percent of papers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lab results available</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to access portal</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Described patient demographics</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported access disparities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Described usability</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to sensitive results</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance with laws or standards</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific vendor platforms</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions:

- Patients most likely to use portals for lab results
- Access disparities
- Peer-reviewed articles on how patients interpret and use laboratory results are lacking
- No peer reviewed articles on compliance issues
Questions?