

Age Influences The Preferred Mode Of Communication In Adults With Congenital Heart Disease.

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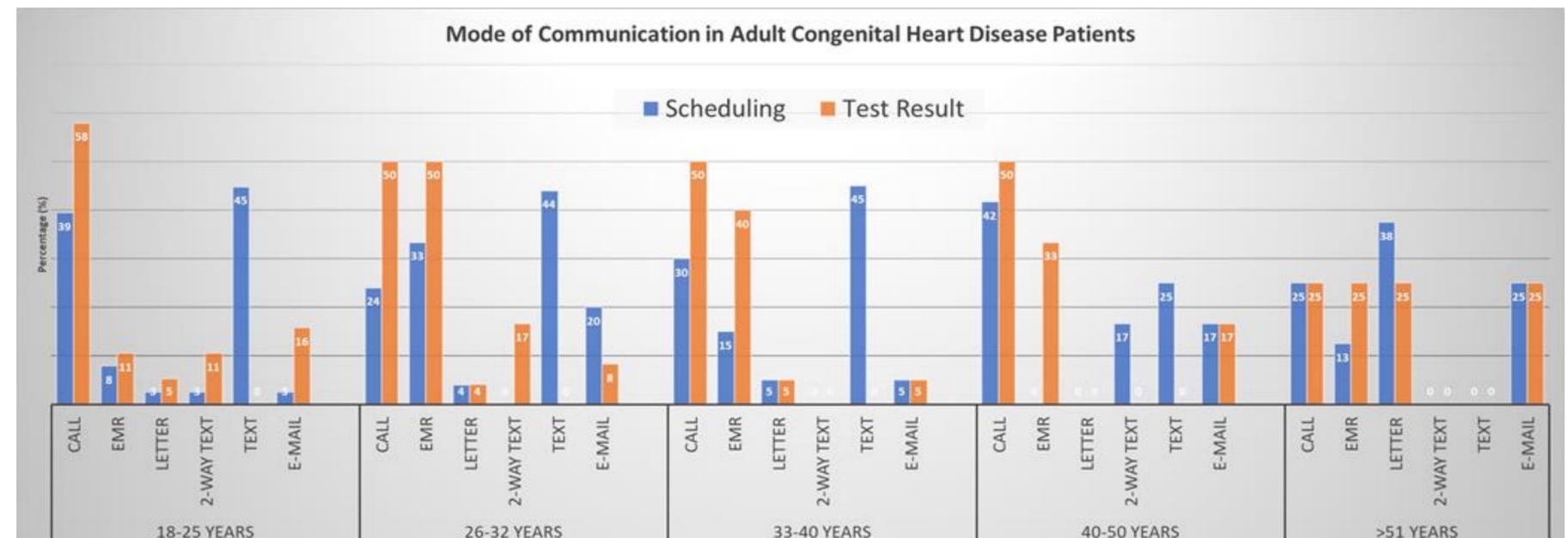
Background

Contacting patients to relay test results or to schedule follow-up appointments can be difficult. Patients and families often do not answer a non-recognizable phone number and voice mailboxes are frequently full. The purpose of the study is to identify contact preferences in adults with congenital heart disease (ACHD) based on their age at the University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital.

Methods and Materials

- A questionnaire was given to 102 ACHD on an iPad during their clinic appointment.
- All patients 18 years and older were given the opportunity to participate in this de-identified questionnaire.
- Patient were divided into 5 different age groups.
- Questions included were ability to fill out questionnaire, age, preferred method to be contacted for scheduling and for test results.
- The options for communication were either phone call, secure patient message through their electronic medical record, letter, two-way secure text using phone app, cellphone text reminder, or e-mail.

Results



- Six out of 102 patients (6%) were not able to answer the questionnaire on their own.
- The preferred mode of communication was text reminder (39%) for scheduling visits and phone call (51%) for test results in the entire group.
- Older patients >51 years of age preferred letter for scheduling a visit (38%) compared to those younger than 51 years (13%). They also preferred test results to be communicated by letter (25%) compared to rest of the group (15%).
- None of the 8 adults >51 years of age preferred text for scheduling or test results.

Discussion

Younger ACHD patients preferred communication to their cellphones, probably for quick and easier access. Older ACHD patients preferred written correspondence for scheduling and test results. Intriguingly, secured two-way texting was not the preferred choice in any group. This initial data will help us plan individualized correspondence mode based on the patient's age, which might improve successful contact rates.

Conclusions

The preferred mode of communication varies and should be tailored by the age of the ACHD patient. While most prefer text reminders or phone calls, it might be easier to contact older patients via letters as the preferred mode of communication.