

Influencing Factors and Mechanism of Patient Engagement in Healthcare: A Survey in China

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Abstract : Objective: It is increasingly recognized that patients' rational and meaningful engagement in healthcare could make important contributions to their health care and safety management. However, recent evidence indicated that patients' actual roles in healthcare didn't match their desired roles, and many patients reported a less active role than desired, which suggested that patient engagement in healthcare may be influenced by various factors. This study aimed to analyze influencing factors on patient engagement and explore the influence mechanism, which will be expected to contribute to the strategy development of patient engagement in healthcare. Methods: On the basis of analyzing the literature and theory study, the research framework was developed. According to the research framework, a cross-sectional survey was employed using the behavior and willingness of patient engagement in healthcare questionnaire, Chinese version All Aspects of Health Literacy Scale, Facilitation of Patient Involvement Scale and Wake Forest Physician Trust Scale, and other influencing factor related scales. A convenience sample of 580 patients was recruited from 8 general hospitals in Shanghai, Jiangsu Province, and Zhejiang Province. Results: The results of the cross-sectional survey indicated that the mean score for the patient engagement behavior was (4.146 ± 0.496) , and the mean score for the willingness was (4.387 ± 0.459) . The level of patient engagement behavior was inferior to their willingness to be involved in healthcare ($t = 14.928, P < 0.01$). The influencing mechanism model of patient engagement in healthcare was constructed by the path analysis. The path analysis revealed that patient attitude toward engagement, patients' perception of facilitation of patient engagement and health literacy played direct prediction on the patients' willingness of engagement, and standard estimated values of path coefficient were 0.341, 0.199, 0.291, respectively. Patients' trust in physician and the willingness of engagement played direct prediction on the patient engagement, and standard estimated values of path coefficient were 0.211, 0.641, respectively. Patient attitude toward engagement, patients' perception of facilitation and health literacy played indirect prediction on patient engagement, and standard estimated values of path coefficient were 0.219, 0.128, 0.187, respectively. Conclusions: Patients engagement behavior did not match their willingness to be involved in healthcare. The influencing mechanism model of patient engagement in healthcare was constructed. Patient attitude toward engagement, patients' perception of facilitation of engagement and health literacy posed indirect positive influence on patient engagement through the patients' willingness of engagement. Patients' trust in physician and the willingness of engagement had direct positive influence on the patient engagement. Patient attitude toward engagement, patients' perception of physician facilitation of engagement and health literacy were the factors influencing the patients' willingness of engagement. The results of this study provided valuable evidence on guiding the development of strategies for promoting patient rational and meaningful engagement in healthcare.

Keywords : healthcare, patient engagement, influencing factor, the mechanism

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