Patient Support using the World Wide Web

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Abstract: Traditional medical care relies on face-to-face encounters in which patient and physician work collaboratively. However, many patients have limited mobility, want additional medical information and wish to share experiences with others in similar medical circumstances. This poster illustrates how the Web can be used as a computer-based tool to augment the physician-patient encounter at the Epilepsy referral center at Massachusetts General Hospital using our “PatientWeb” system. Patients are given access to a library, discussion groups, chatrooms, and the opportunity to communicate privately with healthcare providers. Patients were included in the design process and are involved in the evolution of the site. Monitoring of the project is performed by Epilepsy care providers. We are in the process of examining the impact of this technology on patient satisfaction, quality of life and comparing/contrasting its use to traditional face-to-face encounters. For more information please see www.patientweb.net.