

Feasibility of secure messaging for pediatric patients with chronic disease: Pilot implementation in pediatric respiratory medicine

The goal of this project is to assess the impact on patient care of using text messaging as a tool for communication between providers and pediatric patients and their families. The two main hypotheses of the study are 1) Adolescents may be more prone to send messages to their providers that may be of an urgent nature because of the sense that messaging is “instant” as well as a possible feeling of more privacy, and 2) Adolescents may be more apt to disclose questions about their care that they would not have otherwise brought up with the provider in face-to-face meetings.

While the content of the messages, both from the patients and their families, as well as from providers, will be stored in a database and will be characterized into various categories, the messages themselves are free-form communications. The proposed system is analogous to a telephone hotline, where callers can ask whatever questions they wish about a particular disease or treatment and be provided with an immediate answer from professional staff. While the content of the questions and answers are restricted by the domain of interest, the actual structure of the questions and answers is not predetermined.

For this reason it is not possible to provide a template, or standardized example of a text message exchange.