ABSTRACT

Vocal cord paralysis (VCP) is a common condition seen in routine Otolaryngology-Head and Neck surgery practice. Unfortunately, the intricate anatomy of the larynx and the multiple etiologies and treatment options for VCP make it challenging for physicians to explain the condition clearly and for patients to fully understand VCP.

Although more individuals are accessing information online, the applicability of the material is limited by its complexity. There are several tools available to evaluate patient education materials (PEM) of which ‘readability’ is the most common one. However, though commonly used, readability formulas have several limitations that are important to acknowledge. In view of these limitations, other tools have been proposed to evaluate PEMs. One such tool is the Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool (PEMAT), recently developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. PEMAT evaluates and compares the understandability of written materials as a whole and is designed to be used by laypersons and health professionals alike.

The objective of this study was to evaluate the quality of online vocal cord paralysis PEMs using both a readability assessment and the PEMAT value. The primary hypothesis was that the readability of online PEMs on VCP would be significantly higher than guidelines established by the AMA and NIH. It was also hypothesized that materials with low reading grade levels would be more understandable than higher levels. To evaluate this, the readability was compared and correlated to the understandability of materials.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

VCP PEMs were identified by performing an online internet search on Google search engine in January 2015. The first 50 search results obtained were analyzed. The reading grade level of each article was determined using the following tests: Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease (FRE), Flesch-Kincaid Grade level (FKGL), Gunning-Fog Score (GFS), Coleman-Liau Index (CLI), SMOG Index, Automated Readability Index (ARI) on an online readability calculator (http://readability-score.com). The mean score from the six readability tests was used as the reading level.

The correlation between readability and understandability was determined.

RESULTS

Twenty-nine VCP articles were identified as patient education material from the first 50 Google search results. The reading grade level and understandability varied greatly. There were several tools available to evaluate patient education materials (PEM) of which ‘readability’ is the most common one. However, though commonly used, readability formulas have several limitations that are important to acknowledge. In view of these limitations, other tools have been proposed to evaluate PEMs. One such tool is the Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool (PEMAT), recently developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. PEMAT evaluates and compares the understandability of written materials as a whole and is designed to be used by laypersons and health professionals alike.

The objective of this study was to evaluate the quality of online vocal cord paralysis PEMs using both a readability assessment and the PEMAT value. The primary hypothesis was that the readability of online PEMs on VCP would be significantly higher than guidelines established by the AMA and NIH. It was also hypothesized that materials with low reading grade levels would be more understandable than higher levels. To evaluate this, the readability was compared and correlated to the understandability of materials.

Although more individuals are accessing information online, the applicability of the material is limited by its complexity. There are several tools available to evaluate patient education materials (PEM) of which ‘readability’ is the most common one. However, though commonly used, readability formulas have several limitations that are important to acknowledge. In view of these limitations, other tools have been proposed to evaluate PEMs. One such tool is the Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool (PEMAT), recently developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. PEMAT evaluates and compares the understandability of written materials as a whole and is designed to be used by laypersons and health professionals alike.

The objective of this study was to evaluate the quality of online vocal cord paralysis PEMs using both a readability assessment and the PEMAT value. The primary hypothesis was that the readability of online PEMs on VCP would be significantly higher than guidelines established by the AMA and NIH. It was also hypothesized that materials with low reading grade levels would be more understandable than higher levels. To evaluate this, the readability was compared and correlated to the understandability of materials.

The correlation between readability and understandability was determined.

RESULTS

Twenty-nine VCP articles were identified as patient education material from the first 50 Google search results. The reading grade level and understandability varied greatly. There were several tools available to evaluate patient education materials (PEM) of which ‘readability’ is the most common one. However, though commonly used, readability formulas have several limitations that are important to acknowledge. In view of these limitations, other tools have been proposed to evaluate PEMs. One such tool is the Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool (PEMAT), recently developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. PEMAT evaluates and compares the understandability of written materials as a whole and is designed to be used by laypersons and health professionals alike.

The objective of this study was to evaluate the quality of online vocal cord paralysis PEMs using both a readability assessment and the PEMAT value. The primary hypothesis was that the readability of online PEMs on VCP would be significantly higher than guidelines established by the AMA and NIH. It was also hypothesized that materials with low reading grade levels would be more understandable than higher levels. To evaluate this, the readability was compared and correlated to the understandability of materials.

Although more individuals are accessing information online, the applicability of the material is limited by its complexity. There are several tools available to evaluate patient education materials (PEM) of which ‘readability’ is the most common one. However, though commonly used, readability formulas have several limitations that are important to acknowledge. In view of these limitations, other tools have been proposed to evaluate PEMs. One such tool is the Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool (PEMAT), recently developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. PEMAT evaluates and compares the understandability of written materials as a whole and is designed to be used by laypersons and health professionals alike.

The objective of this study was to evaluate the quality of online vocal cord paralysis PEMs using both a readability assessment and the PEMAT value. The primary hypothesis was that the readability of online PEMs on VCP would be significantly higher than guidelines established by the AMA and NIH. It was also hypothesized that materials with low reading grade levels would be more understandable than higher levels. To evaluate this, the readability was compared and correlated to the understandability of materials.

Although more individuals are accessing information online, the applicability of the material is limited by its complexity. There are several tools available to evaluate patient education materials (PEM) of which ‘readability’ is the most common one. However, though commonly used, readability formulas have several limitations that are important to acknowledge. In view of these limitations, other tools have been proposed to evaluate PEMs. One such tool is the Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool (PEMAT), recently developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. PEMAT evaluates and compares the understandability of written materials as a whole and is designed to be used by laypersons and health professionals alike.

The objective of this study was to evaluate the quality of online vocal cord paralysis PEMs using both a readability assessment and the PEMAT value. The primary hypothesis was that the readability of online PEMs on VCP would be significantly higher than guidelines established by the AMA and NIH. It was also hypothesized that materials with low reading grade levels would be more understandable than higher levels. To evaluate this, the readability was compared and correlated to the understandability of materials.

The correlation between readability and understandability was determined.

RESULTS

Twenty-nine VCP articles were identified as patient education material from the first 50 Google search results. The reading grade level and understandability varied greatly. There were several tools available to evaluate patient education materials (PEM) of which ‘readability’ is the most common one. However, though commonly used, readability formulas have several limitations that are important to acknowledge. In view of these limitations, other tools have been proposed to evaluate PEMs. One such tool is the Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool (PEMAT), recently developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. PEMAT evaluates and compares the understandability of written materials as a whole and is designed to be used by laypersons and health professionals alike.

The objective of this study was to evaluate the quality of online vocal cord paralysis PEMs using both a readability assessment and the PEMAT value. The primary hypothesis was that the readability of online PEMs on VCP would be significantly higher than guidelines established by the AMA and NIH. It was also hypothesized that materials with low reading grade levels would be more understandable than higher levels. To evaluate this, the readability was compared and correlated to the understandability of materials.

Although more individuals are accessing information online, the applicability of the material is limited by its complexity. There are several tools available to evaluate patient education materials (PEM) of which ‘readability’ is the most common one. However, though commonly used, readability formulas have several limitations that are important to acknowledge. In view of these limitations, other tools have been proposed to evaluate PEMs. One such tool is the Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool (PEMAT), recently developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. PEMAT evaluates and compares the understandability of written materials as a whole and is designed to be used by laypersons and health professionals alike.

The objective of this study was to evaluate the quality of online vocal cord paralysis PEMs using both a readability assessment and the PEMAT value. The primary hypothesis was that the readability of online PEMs on VCP would be significantly higher than guidelines established by the AMA and NIH. It was also hypothesized that materials with low reading grade levels would be more understandable than higher levels. To evaluate this, the readability was compared and correlated to the understandability of materials.