2.1 Talking Pathology with Patients: MyPathologyReport.ca

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Histologically, pathology reports were written for clinical eyes only. However, patients all over the world now have access to their pathology report by way of online patient portals. This new reality presents both opportunities and challenges for patients, clinicians, and pathologists. In particular, patients who are able to understand their pathology report are able to make better informed decisions and play a more active role in their care. On the contrary, patients who are unable to understand their report may suffer unnecessary stress and miss opportunities to catch medical errors before they happen. Some barriers to patient engagement can be reduced by modernizing the way we write pathology reports, in particular, using common words in place of technical jargon and ensuring that the most important information is found near the top of the report. Other barriers can be reduced through better health literacy. With this aim in mind, we created a pathology focused online pathology education tool called MyPathologyReport.ca. This tool provides patients with diagnosis specific articles to help them understand their report and an extensive pathology dictionary for commonly used pathology terms. With over a million patients visiting the site since its inception, our experience confirms that given the opportunity patients will read their report and are motivated to learn more about what it means for their care.

Educational Objectives:

By the end of the presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the barriers preventing patients from understanding their pathology report.
2. Describe the features of a patient-centric pathology report.
3. Discuss strategies to improve patient engagement and health literacy as it pertains to pathology.