

ABSTRACT

A SURVEY

OF

PREANAESTHETIC INFORMATION

NEEDS IN

JAMAICAN PATIENTS

Annette Maureen Crawford-Sykes

The study was designed to primarily assess the desire for information in patients awaiting elective surgery at the University Hospital of the West Indies and to see what factors affected this desire. Secondly, the patients' knowledge of anaesthesia, and the impact of an audiovisual presentation about anaesthesia was assessed. Three hundred and eighty-nine patients were interviewed on the day prior to surgery and a questionnaire completed for each patient.

The results showed that the Jamaican patients had an overall positive desire for information concerning anaesthesia and surgery. Priority was given by patients to the more practical aspects of anaesthesia

and surgery such as moving around and eating and drinking.

Younger patients (<40 years), female patients, and patients with no previous operative experience had a greater wish to receive information. Patients with other than tertiary-level education, also expressed a more positive desire for information.

Meeting the anaesthetist was high in the list of priorities and from the reasons advanced, many patients sought to derive some reassurance from this meeting.

Most patients (63%) had a simple understanding of what the anaesthetic was, approximately half of the study population thought that a patient always had to be put to sleep in order to have surgery. If a patient was female, tertiary-level educated, had had a previous operation or had been visited by an anaesthetist prior to the interview, he/she was more likely to have the relevant information on the anaesthetic.

The vast majority of patients (94%) thought that it was a patients' right to have all information, if they wished to do so.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Only a small percentage of the population recalled seeing the audiovisual programme but of that number, approximately half thought it was very good. The further use of this medium for presentation of information was recommended.