

Patient Information Leaflets: Our Clinic Experience in Using QR codes and bit.ly for STI and Contraception Leaflets

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cite as: Sivaraj V, Artykov R, Drysdale J, Cox S, Sethi C, Kulasegaram R, Menon-Johansson A. (2020) Patient information leaflets: Our clinic experience in using QR codes and bit.ly for STI and contraception leaflets. *The Physician* 6(1):c6 DOI: [10.38192/1.6.1.c6](https://doi.org/10.38192/1.6.1.c6)

Introduction:

An innovative approach to deliver patient information leaflets for STI and contraception through QR code to smart phones was initiated as a quality improvement project in our sexual health clinics.

Methods:

A survey was conducted among sexual health clinic staffs on tools used for distribution of patient information leaflets and acceptability of QR code and short url for usage. QR codes linking to official BASHH and FPA online patient information leaflets were created from trust Microsoft word software and displayed as small stickers at clinic rooms for usage.

Results:

On initial baseline survey of our clinic staffs (n=22, 9 Doctors, 7 Nurses, 2 Health Advisers, 4 Receptionist) on their practice of distributing information leaflets, 28% were showing websites on computer monitor, 24% mentioned name of the website verbally, 9% gave handwritten website information, 19% were using other methods. Survey also showed 81% agreed for bit.ly and 76% agreed for QR codes as tools to distribute patient information leaflets. Feedback from staff on QR code usage (n=10) revealed QR code an acceptable tool which is easy to use, faster, secure, reliable during consultation for distribution of patient information leaflets. It worked only in clinic area with good mobile network and if patient using a smart phone. On second stage of the project, bit.ly codes were created for different clinic sites (bit.ly/srhbs, bit.ly/srhwr, bit.ly/srhsh) and were incorporated to second version of QR codes. Virtual monitoring of leaflet distribution was created through bit.ly portal. The total budget for this project was zero.

Discussion:

Newer generation smart phones have camera with built in QR code scanner. Bit.ly codes are widely used by NHS trusts. Both these tools can be safely and effectively used for distribution of patient information leaflets in sexual health clinics with no additional cost to the service.