

**PATIENT-PHYSICIAN COMMUNICATION; THE  
IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION FOR  
SURGICAL PROCEDURES**

**Honors Thesis**

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of Bachelor of Science in Healthcare Studies**

In the School of Maguire Meservey College of Health and Human Services  
at Salem State University

By

Joice Oliveira

Dr. Patrice DeLeon  
Faculty Advisor  
Department of Healthcare Studies

\*\*\*

Commonwealth Honors Program  
Salem State University  
2022

## Abstract

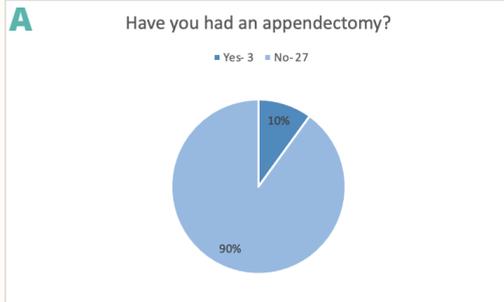
A physician's ability to effectively communicate information to their patient is critical for a successful patient-physician relationship. Patients who understand their physician are prone to acknowledge their health condition, understand their treatment plan, adjust their behavior, and follow recommendations. For the following research study, I reviewed current literature on how physicians communicate with young patients about surgical procedures. I recruited undergraduate students at Salem State University to participate in a brief anonymous survey about their experiences with open or laparoscopic appendectomies. Results yielded that 3 out of 30 participants had a laparoscopic appendectomy; 2 of those 3 participants reported having struggled with obtaining satisfactory information about the procedure.

## Acknowledgements

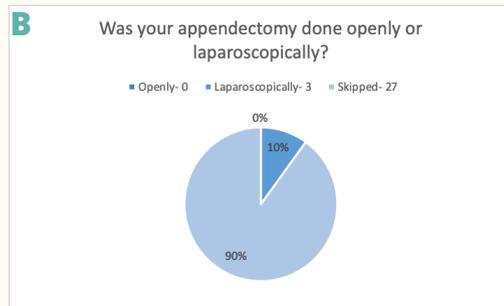
First and foremost, I would like to thank God for blessing me throughout this project. I would also like to thank my parents and sister for their tremendous support and encouragement. And lastly, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my advisor, Patrice DeLeon, for her assistance and continuous dedication to this project.



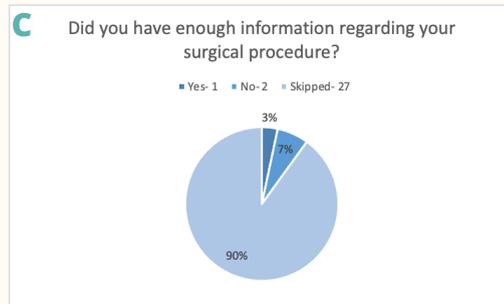
## Results



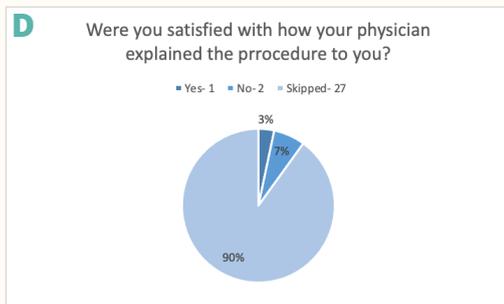
3 out of 30 participants have had an appendectomy



The 3 participants had a laparoscopic appendectomy



2 out of the 3 participants said they did not have enough information about the surgical procedure



2 out of the 3 participants said they were not satisfied with how their physician explained the procedure

*Appendicitis affects  
1 in 1,000 people  
living in the U.S.*

## References

Asnani M. R. (2009). Patient-physician communication. *The West Indian Medical Journal, 58*(4), 357–361.

Committee Opinion No. 587: Effective patient-physician communication. (2014). *Obstetrics and Gynecology, 123*(2 Pt 1), 389–393. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.AOG.0000443279.14017.12>

Frymoyer, J. W., & Frymoyer, N. P. (2002). Physician-patient communication: a lost art?. *Journal of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, 10*(2), 95–105. <https://doi.org/10.5435/00124635-200203000-00005>

Ha, J. F., & Longnecker, N. (2010). Doctor-patient communication: a review. *The Ochsner Journal, 10*(1), 38–43.

Johns Hopkins Medicine. (2019, August). Appendectomy. Johns Hopkins Medicine. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/treatment-tests-and-therapies/appendectomy>

Sabherwal, N., Mittal, A., Pandey, N. K., & Kaustav, P. (2015). A study of patient-physician communication and barriers in communication. *International Journal of Research Foundation of Hospital & Healthcare Administration, 10*(1), 1–10. <https://www.jrfhha.com/doi/pdf/10.5005/jp-journals-10035-1040>

Travaline, J. M., Ruchinskas, R., & D'Alonzo, G. E., Jr (2005). Patient-physician communication: why and how. *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association, 105*(1), 13–18.

Trummer, U. F., Mueller, U. O., Nowak, P., Stidl, T., & Pelikan, J. M. (2006). Does physician-patient communication that aims at empowering patients improve clinical outcome? A case study. *Patient Education and Counseling, 61*(2), 299–306. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2005.04.009>

# Patient-Physician Communication The Importance of Effective Communication for Surgical Procedures

Joice Oliveira

[j\\_oliveira2@salemstate.edu](mailto:j_oliveira2@salemstate.edu)



## Importance of Patient-Physician Communication

- Patient-physician communication (PPC) allows patients to acknowledge their health problems, understand treatment options, adjust their behavior, and follow recommendations (Travaline et al., 2005).
- PPC influences interpersonal relationships, the exchange of information, and decision making (Ha, J. F., & Longnecker, N., 2010).
- PPC helps physicians gather complete information, provide accurate diagnosis, and facilitates appropriate counseling (ACOG, 2014).

## What Does Effective PPC Look Like?

### AIDET & RESPECT (ACOG, 2014)

<b>A</b> cknowledge	<b>R</b> apport
<b>I</b> ntroduce	<b>E</b> mpathy
<b>D</b> uration	<b>S</b> upport
<b>E</b> xplanation	<b>P</b> artnership
<b>T</b> hank you	<b>E</b> xplanations
	<b>C</b> ultural Competence
	<b>T</b> rust

## Barriers of Effective PPC

- Patients' fear and anxiety
- Doctors' burden of work
- Language, culture and ethnicity (Sabherwal et al., 2015)

## PPC & Surgical Procedure

As part of today's fast-paced, technological world, patient-physician relationships often get lost. The demand to utilize the most advanced machinery easily overshadows the necessity of effective communication. According to (Asnani, 2009), PPC has three core values, "(a) considering patients' needs, wants, perspectives and individual experiences, (b) offering patients opportunities to provide input into and participate in their care and (c) enhancing partnership and understanding in the patient-physician relationship." Effective communication leads to improved clinical outcomes. When patients are satisfied with their relationship and communication levels with their physician, they are more likely to be better informed and compliant.

## What is an appendectomy?

An appendectomy is a medical procedure used to remove an inflamed appendix (Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2019).

**Open appendectomy:** an incision about 2 to 4 inches long is made on the lower right side of the abdomen (Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2019).

**Laparoscopic appendectomy:** a less invasive procedure performed through smaller incisions. The surgeon uses tools and a TV monitor to see inside the abdomen (Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2019).



## Study

As a member of the Commonwealth Honors Program we must complete a thesis project. I researched how physicians communicate with young patients about their appendectomy procedure.

## Objectives

- Perform a literature review
- Conduct a survey
  - 16 questions
  - Anonymous
- Analyze data

## Participant Requirements

- Participants must be over the age of 18
- Currently enrolled at Salem State University (SSU)

## Outreach

- Share the survey with students via:
  - SSU class Facebook pages (2022-2025)
  - Honors Program weekly newsletter
  - Healthcare Studies mailing list

## Data

- 30 responses
  - 27 participants have not had an appendectomy
  - 3 participants had a laparoscopic appendectomy