Background

• The 21st Century Cures Act now requires healthcare institutions to immediately release all medical records to patients
• Studies in other fields have determined patient understanding of medical jargon is poor
• Patient comprehension of breast pathology terms has not been well studied

Objective

Evaluate patient comprehension of terminology common to breast biopsy pathology reports

Methods

• Survey administered at 4 distinct screening mammography sites:
  - Define and interpret 8 medical terms
  - 3 health literacy screening questions
  - Patient demographics
• Patient responses independently scored by 2 reviewers using predetermined rubric of definitions

Results

- 527 patients completed the survey.
- Most correctly defined: ‘Malignant’ (80%) and ‘Benign’ (73%)
- Least correctly defined: ‘High Grade’ (1%)
- ≤ 4 correct terms associated with:
  - Feeling uncomfortable interpreting medical reports
  - Often/always have difficulty understanding written information.
  - Black/African American race
  - Education level

Conclusions

• Terminology common to breast biopsy pathology reports is largely misunderstood
• Lower scores correlated with reporting difficulty understanding written information and feeling uncomfortable interpreting medical reports
• Race/ethnicity & education level correlate most with odds of scoring poorly
• Assumptions about patient understanding based on the patients past medical history and/or prior exposure to healthcare could be displaced

Implications

• Patients need resources while independently reviewing their medical records.
• Future work must focus on designing educational tools to improve the patient experience

Disclosures

No disclosures or conflicts of interest