Reducing Communication Apprehension For New Patients Through Information Found Within Physicians’ Biographies

This study investigated whether people who are highly communicatively apprehensive (CA) with new physicians could reduce their apprehension prior to consultations through information found within online biographies. An online experiment exposed high CA participants to three different physicians’ biographies: one containing limited, one professional, and one personal information. CA was reduced the greatest when participants were exposed to the biography containing personal information about the physician, which allowed patients to perceive greater levels of similarity with the physician. This study can potentially help healthcare systems in improving the information they offer to prospective patients online, especially those with high CA, to hopefully ensure more communicatively effective consultations.