RESULTS

METHODS

1. Describe the frequency of risk-benefit discussions prior to outpatient CT imaging
2. Assess the preference for more information in those about to get an outpatient CT
3. Assess patient knowledge of radiation risks and whether recalling a risk-benefit discussion improved knowledge.

This was a cross-sectional, single center survey at the Denver Veteran’s Affairs Medical Center. Consecutive patients in the outpatient CT scan waiting room were invited to complete a short, self-administered survey. The survey contained items assessing:

1. Participant demographics
2. Presence of risk-benefit discussions (Table 1)
3. Preference for more information (Table 1)
4. Knowledge of radiation risks (Table 2 and Table 3)

Pearson’s chi-squared test was used to determine differences in knowledge between those who reported having a discussion of risks and benefits and those who did not.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Few patients recalled discussing both risks and benefits prior to undergoing outpatient CT imaging. Patient knowledge of whether a CT scan has more radiation relative to a chest x-ray or background radiation was poor. The presence of risk-benefit discussions did not improve knowledge.

IMPLICATIONS: Findings from this study call into question the quality of the few risk-benefit discussions taking place. Future studies should evaluate barriers to conducting risk-benefit discussions and which practices can more effectively inform patients.

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