

The CATALYST Project

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Introduction

- Researchers at the Cancer Health Equity for Excellence investigate ways to reduce healthcare disparities among cancer patients
- Racial minority groups tend to opt for genetic testing the least
- CATALYST Project aims to increase genetic testing among individuals with a high risk for hereditary cancers

Objective of Internship

I wanted to increase my knowledge about telehealth and the ways in which it can be used to effectively reach the Black demographic

Work profile

- Specific aim: compare genetic testing uptake across three arms of the study
- My role: help create a design for the chatbot arm
- I worked with other interns to determine what the best approach was to help guide people through genetic testing so that the rate of testing would increase

Reflection

I contributed to the project by:

- Finalizing Family History Questions needed to trace cancer within a family
- Finalizing Risk Assessment Questions needed to determine a patient's cancer risk
- Creating a list of FAQs for patients to help with understanding medical jargon
- Developing a model for a Family Tree based on Family History Questions
- Help finalize a design for a genetic testing Readiness Ruler

What I learned:

- Even the smallest detail in a design can make patients feel unheard, unwelcomed, or offended
- It is important that any information gathered from research is clearly presented so that others in the field can understand it and expound on it
- Cultural competency is a valuable skill in the healthcare field as you work with diverse populations
- Honest, open conversations about issues like race, ethnicity and gender in the healthcare community have a positive impact on patients' experiences

Looking ahead

- I plan to be a physician and researcher that investigates diseases that affect people of color the most
- This summer experience has taught me to be sensitive to cultural differences when designing research projects or working with patients

Questions

- What else can we do to make marginalized groups feel comfortable interacting with healthcare professionals (on both a small and large scale)?

Conclusion

- There is a lot of effort put into making telehealth a welcoming experience for patients, especially for those from minority groups

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