

Barriers to Text Support after Hospital Discharge



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INTRO

- Hospital readmissions are expensive and often preventable.
- The Vanderbilt Discharge Care Center is working to reduce readmissions by checking on discharged patients via text.
- Up to 31% of patients are opting out of this service.

METHODS

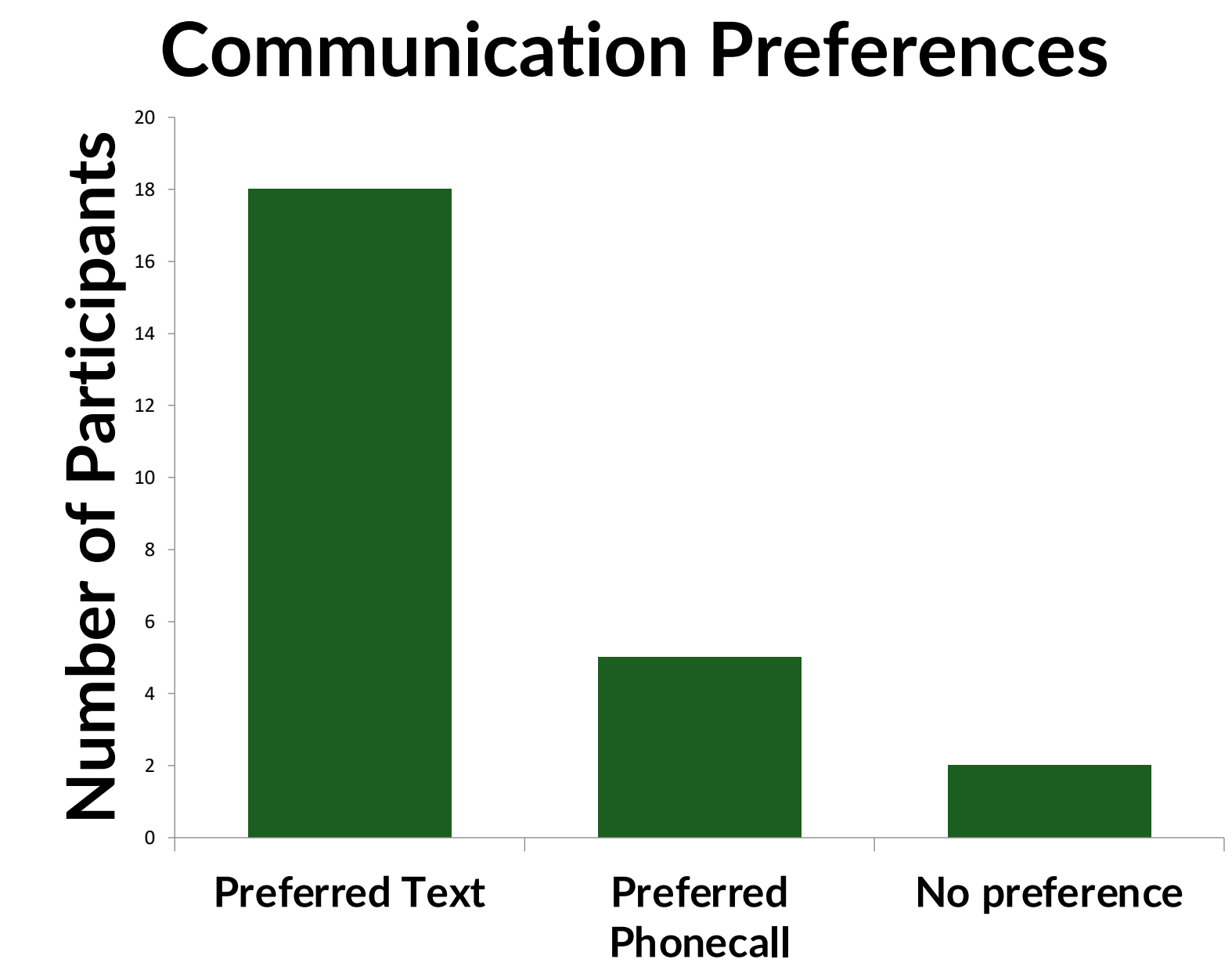
- To understand why patients are choosing not to get the texts from the DCC, I called and spoke with 25 patients who had recently opted out.
- I asked the patients why they opted out, if there was anything that could have improved their experience, and if they would have preferred a phone call instead of a text.
- I categorized the answers into four groups: no need, problem with the system or technology, preference, or dissatisfaction.

RESULTS

Reason	Number	Feedback
Did not have a need	13	"I liked that it helped me know who to call if I needed help. Texts were good, short and sweet. Opted out because I felt better."
		"I'm not entirely sure of the purpose, I think I would have just called my PCP if I needed help."
System or technology problem	7	"The texts were fine, they weren't overly intrusive, they just went on for a long time."
		"There was a lot going on at discharge, it would have been nice to get a phone call the first day out to explain it. Texts preferred but would have been nice to have a phone call to explain it and start it off."
Personal preference	4	"I would have preferred a phone call. It's sometimes just nice to hear a human voice."
		"I would have called someone if I needed help, didn't need to keep getting all those texts. Fewer texts would have been nice."
Dissatisfaction	1	"I called in and felt like no one was taking me seriously. It felt like it was pointless, so I opted out."
		"Psych support would be good. It can take months to get in with specialists after discharge, so having someone to talk to who would really listen and help with mental health would have been good."
		"Text preferred, but maybe a phone call every third day or something."

Most people in this project who opted out of text support after hospital discharge did so because they *did not feel the need to be checked on any longer.*

Most participants reported they *preferred texts over phone calls.*



DISCUSSION

- The findings from this project indicate that most patients who opted out of the service simply did not require it any longer.
- Patients believe this is a great service and appreciate being checked on.
- The DCC should continue the post-discharge texts, though may consider a phone call as the first method of communication immediately after discharge.
- Based on patient feedback, the DCC may consider decreasing the duration of the service.
- The DCC could consider offering patients the choice between check-ins via text or phone call as some patients do prefer to speak with someone.
- Future researchers have an opportunity to evaluate if post-discharge check-ins truly do reduce hospital readmission rates.

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