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A Comparison of Preoperative Telephone Consultations vs. Mailed Preoperative Educational Materials on Patient Reported Outcomes

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Introduction and Objectives: Preoperative education has uncertain benefits on the preparedness and satisfaction of Mohs micrographic surgery patients. Patients may receive written material and/or a preoperative telephone call before the procedure. Our objective was to determine if patient satisfaction and preparedness was improved through preoperative phone consults.

Methods: All new Mohs patients (N=208) received a packet containing a procedure summary and surgery preparation checklist. Approximately half of those patients were randomized to also receive a preoperative phone call. Patients completed anonymous surveys, before and after the procedure, ranking preparedness for the procedure and satisfaction with preoperative education received.

Results: One hundred and three (103) patients were randomized into the letter only (LO) group, and 105 patients were randomized into the phone call and letter (PCL) group. Mean age and sex distribution was similar between groups. There was no statistical difference between groups in preoperative or postoperative preparedness ($p=0.2605$ and $p=0.2478$, respectively). The LO group had higher percentages of patients “somewhat satisfied” and “not satisfied” pre-procedure than did the PCL group ($p=0.0131$). This difference was not significant for postoperative satisfaction ($p=0.0574$).

Conclusions: Patients receiving a letter felt equally prepared for the Mohs procedure as those receiving a phone call and letter. Although the LO group had a higher percentage of patients somewhat satisfied or not satisfied prior to the procedure than did the PCL group, this difference was not sustained when patients were asked the same question postoperatively. These findings may impact resource allocations in practices hoping to increase operating efficiency.