

DOCUMENT DESIGN IN MEDICAL LABELING



As we have started to explore this semester document design is critical to many fields. One field that we are going to look at today is the medical field. When you look at a bottle of medication you will notice that each one should come with a uniquely designed label. This label holds a great deal of value to the patient prescribed to it. The way the label is designed is fundamental to the safety of the patient at care. The labels are used to help inform patients and caregivers on the medicine enclosed. It should include the name of the medication, the dosage

requirements and educate the patient about the side effects, when to take it and more.

The overall issue? There have been cases when the document design has not been effective in the messaging to its audience and the results can be problematic. If the patient does not understand the way in which the labeling is designed it can lead to medical problems such as overdose, allergy complications and death. This is important because when using proper design measures and keeping your audience in mind it can lead to safer consumption.

Design challenges include but are not limited to:

- Type face being too small especially for those who regularly need a larger print
- Font selection can be difficult to read
- The terms and select word choice can be hard to comprehend
- Important information is not always presented clearly but rather dense
- Packaging that may be similar across brands
- Unnecessary distractions to the design
- Important information that appears to be hidden
- Confusion on images and colors

ACCORDING TO RESEARCH

DID YOU KNOW?

According to ConsumerMedSafety.org "...A report from the Institute of Medicine in 2006 cited medicine labeling and packaging issues as the primary cause of 33% of all medication errors and 30% of deaths from medication errors."

According to the article "Prescription Drug Labeling Medication Errors: A Big Deal for Pharmacists" there have been studies that have witnessed these issues firsthand more often than we may think. "Seven recent studies have demonstrated that patients frequently have difficulty in reading and understanding medication labels" (1).

According to the article "Prescription Drug Labeling Medication Errors: A Big Deal for Pharmacists" suggest that this can be fixed with proper design features. "Evidences are available for best practices in labeling format and content, such as increasing font size, using clear and simple language, using headers, and placing a more appropriate emphasis on organizing label content around what is most important for patients such as drug name, dose, dosage or usage instructions, patient name, doctor name, quantity, refill information, and provider content such as pharmacy name, logo and national drug code number should be in optimal font size" (3).

LESSON PLAN

READING:

After reading the discussion on medical labeling above please read the following article from ConsumerMedSafety.org. In this article you will be able to familiarize yourself with this document design issue. Once finished reading continue on to the following activity in which you will apply what you have learned.

["How labels, packages, and medicine names can cause confusion and errors"](#)

ACTIVITY:

Design your own medicine label based on what you learned from this lesson. When designing this label please keep in mind the issues mentioned above. Place yourself in the shoes of a patient what would you want and coming from a rhetorical standpoint how could someone in this design field help to improve this evolving design problem?

Works Cited

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