

Creating Effective Infographics, What Matters? A Literature Review

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Introduction

Infographics are data visualizations that present complex information quickly and clearly to an audience. They are commonly used in various fields such as law and healthcare to communicate key messages. Even though there are multiple benefits to creating medical infographics (Figure 1), learning to make effective infographics is not commonly taught in medical school.

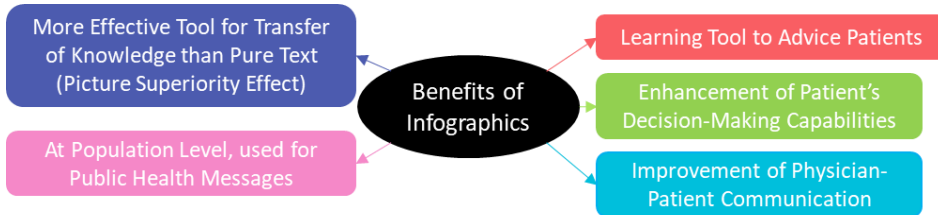


Figure 1: Benefits of Infographics in the Medical Field

Objectives

To determine characteristics of an effective infographic that increases cognition, supports knowledge translation and physician-patient communication.

Methods

The following databases were searched using search terms suggested by a librarian: MEDLINE (OVID), EMBASE, CINAHL, Library and Information Science Source, Library and Information Science Abstracts, ERIC, and Communication Mass Media Complete. English-language articles published after 2010 were included. Data from included articles (author, year of publication, country, research question, target population, study design, criteria used to evaluate infographics, outcome measures, and results) were tabulated on a custom-made data extraction form.

Results

Ten articles that met the inclusion criteria were found, all of which were published after 2015 with 7 being from US and the rest from UK, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. Based on these studies, five key features of an effective infographic were identified (Figure 2).

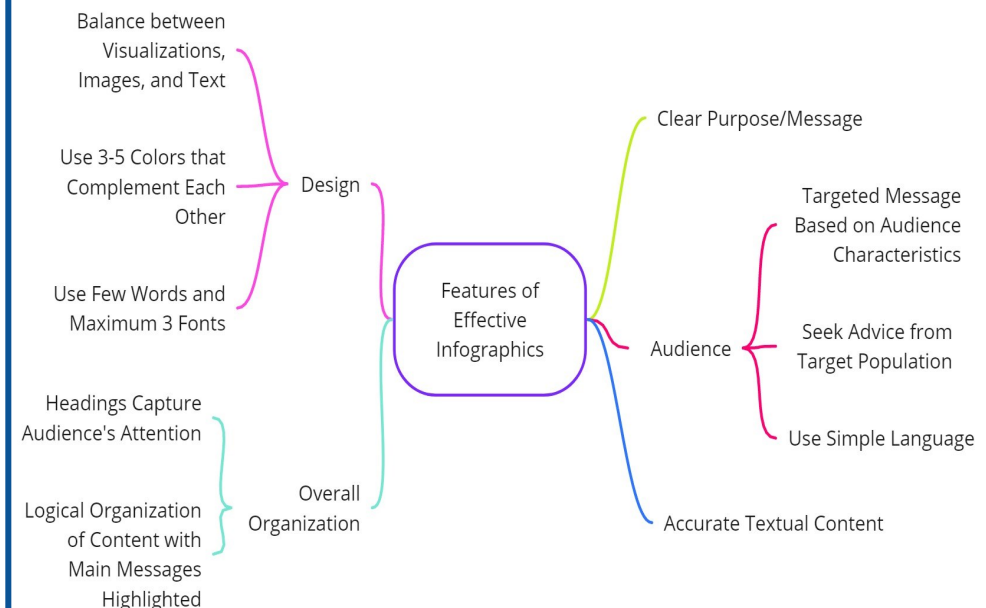


Figure 2: Features of Effective Infographics

Conclusion

Although an infographic can transfer knowledge about a topic faster than pure text, this condition is dependent on the quality of the infographic. The findings of this study are being used to develop a rubric to help students design effective infographics as part of Family Medicine Clerkship at the University of Calgary. Developing infographics in partnership with patients using empathy and human-centered design theories has potential to improve patient-centered communication.