Improving the Treatment of Substance Use Disorders Across a Large Health System

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Methodology

The study was conducted internally within UPMC health system. There were 2600 participants including Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Nurse Anesthetists, and Nurse midwives. The platform of the study was through online interaction using audiovisual format. The testing modality was comparing pre-testing data with the post-testing data once participants viewed the educational lecture.

The initial survey to gather providers’ SUD treatment experience was sent via SurveyMonkey.com and was made available for participants for 1 month duration. There were a total of 245 responses to the survey.

The second phase was surveying the health system’s Advanced Practice Providers (APPs) who are license and are able to prescribe medications, presentation. Participants are all employees of the University of Health and Human Services consistently reported high numbers of overdose deaths, especially involving opioids, for the counties served by our health system.

The purpose of this study is to improve treatment access to Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) patients. By providing education that is tailored to evaluating, treating, and monitoring Substance Use Disorder patients, providers will be better prepared to treat affected patients. As more providers participate in SUD treatment, it will provide better access to patient care.

Background

The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) health system is based out of Pittsburgh, PA and operates 40 hospitals and 700 physician offices and clinics. However, our Opioid Use Disorder Center of Excellence is located up to 200 miles away from our most remote office, which created an issue that limits our ability to fulfill the mission across our system. As of October 2019, the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services consistently reported high numbers of overdose deaths, especially involving opioids, for the counties served by our health system.

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Results

The study was conducted internally within UPMC health system. There were 2600 participants including Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Nurse Anesthetists, and Nurse midwives. The platform of the study was through online interaction using audiovisual format. The testing modality was comparing pre-testing data with the post-testing data once participants viewed the educational lecture.

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Discussion

The data from the study indicated that participants improved knowledge of substance use disorder treatment from 75% at baseline to 86.4% after viewing the education module. The change, which was an increase by 15.2%, is an indication that participants have a better understanding of treating SUDs through the education that they received. The result from this project supported our proposal, which was to improve the treatment of substance use disorders.

The purpose of the project was to provide educational material to providers. Therefore, we did not do follow up on the application of the knowledge gained to the patient population. That may be the next phase of the project if needed.

There were limitations during the project that may affect the outcome. COVID 19 pandemic occurred when the initial survey was disseminated which limited the number of participants in the survey. At that time, the APPs within the health system were mobilized to focus on managing COVID-19 pandemic related issues. Therefore, APPs may not have been able to participate during the duration that the Powerpoint educational module was made available. The second limiting factor was the duration with which the educational module was disseminated, which was only 3 weeks long. The limited amount of time limits the number of people who were able to participate in receiving the education.

Conclusion

The project was successful in providing educational material to providers. The purpose of the project was to improve treatment access to Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) patients. By providing education that is tailored to evaluating, treating, and monitoring Substance Use Disorder patients, providers will be better prepared to treat affected patients. As more providers participate in SUD treatment, it will improve access to patient care.

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References


