Efficacy of a Substance Abuse Screening Tool in the Emergency Department

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BACKGROUND

- There are mixed results in the effectiveness of substance abuse screening and counseling in the ED setting.
- One method, the Tobacco, Alcohol, Prescription Medication, and Other Substance use (TAPS) tool was initially developed for substance abuse screening in the adult primary care setting, however it is a quick and easy to perform survey which makes it attractive for adapting to the ED setting. (1)
- The TAPS tool is validated and has shown utility in identifying DSM-5 substance use disorder (SUD). (2)
- The aim of this pilot study was to assess the efficacy screening adult ED patients using the TAPS tool, providing outpatient resources, and assessing the number of patients who followed-up with an addiction resource.

METHODS

- Design: Cross-sectional survey of emergency room patients from single emergency department.
- Patients were enrolled for substance abuse screening over the course of 2 weeks with the TAPS tool.
- The TAPS tool consists of 2 sections, if a patient was positive on TAPS-1 this would prompt a TAPS-2 assessment to determine a substance-specific risk category.
- Patients who scored 2+ were provided a list of local outpatient resources for substance abuse treatment.
- Approximately 2-4 weeks after screening patients were followed up via phone survey and asked if they contacted (call, email, or visit) an addiction resource.
- Institutional Review Board Approval was obtained.
- No statistical analysis was performed as the study was a pilot study and not powered for statistical significance

RESULTS

- 112 patients enrolled
- 62 patients screened positive on TAPS-2 and were provided outpatient addiction resources
- 2 patients refused to provide contact information for follow-up, 1 patient was already in addiction treatment and refused follow-up, and 4 did not have appropriate contact info for follow-up
- 12 (19.4%) contacted addiction resources.
- 24 (38.7%) did not contact an addiction resource.
- 3 preferred not to answer the follow-up question when called. Screeners were unable to contact 16 patients.
- 5 out of 26 (19.2%) patients who screened positive for illicit drug use contacted addiction resources.
- 10 out of 53 (18.8%) patients who screened positive for tobacco use contacted addiction resources.
- 2 out of 15 (13.3%) patients who screened positive for alcohol use contacted addiction resources.
- 0 patients screened positive for abuse of prescription drugs

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