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An Analysis of the State of Urological Care in Rural Communities

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Introduction and Objective

- 13,790 urologist nationwide with only 0.5% practice in rural areas¹
- Pennsylvania has a high Urologist to population ratio of 5.12 per 100,000 compared to national averages¹
 - To meet population needs 13-20 urologist are needed per 100,000 people within the population
- Previously implemented strategies to combat rural health care shortage
 - St. Luke's rural residency program
 - The SPARC Act: currently in the legislative process
 - Loan repayment program to encourage specialty physicians to serve in rural areas
- Objective
 - To assess the satisfaction of patients' urological care in remote areas and attempt to find solutions to increase the number of rural physicians

Methods

- Physicians with skills to provide urological care assigned to rural areas
- Survey on quality of care and satisfaction of care given to patient after seeing a family physician for urological care
- Survey sent to a random selection of patients after a visit for a course of six months
- Determine sample size based on population and number of physicians

Results

- Data will be analyzed using exploratory and inferential statistics to look at the impact the family physicians have on the rural patients
- Compare patient response based on different variables such as distance from previous urology physician, distance to new physician, age, and how often they are going for a visit
- Form graphs and tables to represent and interpret data collected
- Identify correlations and trends between the different variables

Survey Questions:

1. Rate 1-10 how well your questions were answered by family physician seen. (1=Not at all; 10=Satisfactory Answers)
2. Do you have any remaining questions or concerns?
3. Rate 1-10 how satisfied you are with the distance you traveled to see your physician. (1=Too far; 10=Satisfied)
4. Rate 1-10 how satisfied you are with the time it took to see your physician. (1=Too long; 10=Satisfied)
5. Are you satisfied with the quality of care you received from your physician?
6. Are you likely to continue to see the same physician in the future?
7. Rate 1-10 if the service reflected the value of money it cost to receive care. (1=Too expensive; 10=Worth the cost)
8. Rate 1-10 how you would compare the physician you saw today with previous urology physician you have received care from



Conclusion

- Only 0.5% of urologist practice in rural areas
- Determine the level of satisfaction of patients in their current state of receiving urological care
- Survey sent to each patient after visit
- Analyze data from patients receiving care from different physicians and clinics throughout the area or different areas

Future Direction

- Are family physicians able to extend urological care under the supervision of urology department for non-surgical issues
 - Potentially improve surgical referral process to urologists
- Impact on number of patients going to emergency room for urological issues
- Implement strategies to increase number of new physicians working in rural areas
- Can this be implemented to other surgical specialties

References

1. *The State of Urology Workforce and Practice in the United States.* (2021).