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Integrating Disability: Evaluating the Usefulness of “My Health Report” and its Effect on Doctor-Patient Communication

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Introduction

It is estimated that approximately 4.6 million Americans have an intellectual or developmental disability (IDD). Patients with IDD are gaining more recognition as a population experiencing significant disparities in healthcare. Individuals with IDD have a greater need for healthcare; however, disability has been found to be a risk factor for dissatisfaction and disappointment with provider encounters. Patients with IDD experience a variety of barriers when attempting to access healthcare. One potential strategy for alleviating these disparities, overcoming barriers to access and providing quality healthcare services to patients with IDD, is through improved doctor-patient communication.

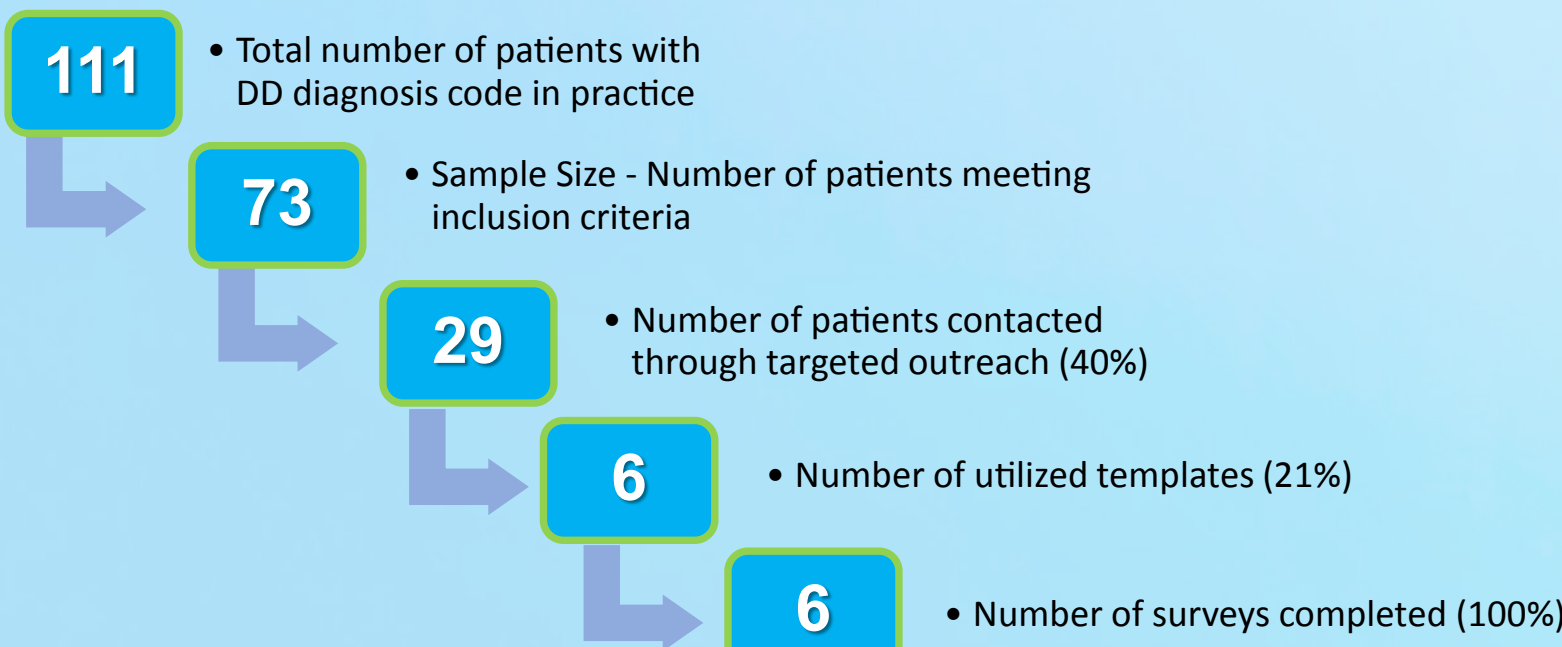
Problem Statement

How do standardized health history templates improve doctor-patient communication and patient satisfaction between patients with IDD and their primary care physicians?

Methods

- My Health Report was piloted at LVHN Family Health Center
- Human subject research determination was completed and IRB review was not required for this quality improvement project
- Patients identified within the practice via F89 diagnosis code for “Developmental Disability”
- All patients with F89 diagnosis code and scheduled appointment during distribution period (June-December) met inclusion criteria for
- EMR report generated each month to identify patients with upcoming appointments
- Chart review performed at end of each month to determine “use” of the template during encounter
- Post-encounter surveys distributed to patients/caregivers and providers
- Surveys items to evaluate ease-of-use, utility during encounter, effect on time spent completing the template or collecting medical history, and overall satisfaction with encounter
- Data collected through survey responses and EMR, data was analyzed using mixed methods analysis

Figure 1. Sample Recruitment



*Five unique providers were involved in the six patient encounters utilizing templates. Survey responses were collected from four of the five providers (80%).

Results

Table 1. Demographics	
PATIENTS (n=6)	
Gender	
Male	3
Female	3
Age	
<18	1
>18	5
Home Status	
With Family	4
Residential Facility	2
Completed By	
Patient	0
Family Member/Caregiver	6
Past or Current Leadership Position (n=34)	
PATIENTS (n=4)	
Provider Status	
PCP	1
Covering Provider	3
Provider Status	
Physician	3
APC	1

- Quantitative data depicting patient and provider demographics (Tables 1) and survey responses were collected (Table 2)
- Qualitative data was elicited through open-ended survey questions. A total of 6 patients and 4 providers (one provider saw two unique patients) completed returned post-encounter surveys
- Patient surveys were completed by family members/caregivers (100%; N=6).
- Providers were mostly physicians (75%; N=3) and identified as a “covering provider” – not the patient’s designated PCP (75%; N=3)
- Common themes identified included: time, ease of use, utility, satisfaction and areas for improvement

Overall, patients and caregivers felt that it improved communication during the encounter, and were satisfied with their visit. Though providers had varied responses, overall, they believed the template was a helpful and efficient tool with various positive impacts on interactions and communication with patients.

Table 2. Survey Data						
Survey Items		Patient/Caregiver		Provider		Selected Responses
Patient/Caregiver	Provider	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
How long did it take you to complete the tool?	How long did you spend with the patient?	3	0	2	0.82	"Actually [I spent] a lot less, like 5-10 minutes."
	How long did you spend collecting the patient's history?			2.5	1	"Less than 15 minutes"
Did you find the tool easy to use?	Did you find the tool easy to use?	4.5	0.5	4.75	0.5	"I had difficulty getting it printed out to bring in."
Did you find the tool easy to fill out?		5	0			"Some questions seemed too superficial."
Did you have any difficulty understanding the questions on the tool?		5	0			"Some questions did not pertain to my daughter because she is still so young."
Do you feel the information on the tool was important for your doctor to have?	Do you feel the information in the tool was relevant for the visit?	5	0	3.75	1.89	"It included everything I would need to know about the patient's history when meeting them for the first time and it made it easier to spend less time collecting that information so I could focus on what we had to take care of during the visit."
Did the tool help you feel more prepared for the appointment?	Did you feel more confident in the accuracy of the information?	3	0	2.5	1	"I felt slightly more prepared for this visit." "[The tool] helped formulate questions"
Was the tool easy to share with your doctor?	Did you feel it helped expedite the history taking process?	3	0	2	0.82	"I didn't have to repeat myself as much."
Do you feel that your doctor used the tool during your visit?		3	0			"[They] were comparing information with what was in the computer and updating it and making changes."
Do you feel like the tool improved communication with your doctor?	Do you feel it helped improve your communication with the patient?	2.33	0.42	2.5	1	"Spent less time collecting history and was able to give a summary sentence of what I knew and allowed them to make clarifications and focus on what was important for the visit that day."
Did you feel like you had more time to talk with your doctor?	Do you feel the tool made data gathering easier (compared to searching through chart/EMR)?	3	0	2	0.82	"I was able to get help managing medications."
Did your doctor have more time to answer your questions?	Do you feel like you had more time to answer patient or caregiver questions?	3	0	2.5	0.58	"Loved it, very helpful and efficient way to collect more information in less time."
Overall, how satisfied were you with your visit?	Overall, do you believe the tool is useful for appointments with patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities?	3	0	2.5	1	"I think this is a nice way to summarize important information. [They] may have their own version or summary paperwork, but this would be nice to standardize for medical home patients."

Discussion

- Provides framework for the visit – draws focus to the needs & goals of patients/caregivers (patient/caregiver satisfaction)
- Patient/Caregiver Preparedness (utility of the template)
- Template acts as a conduit for conversation (utility of the template)
- Efficient (though not novel) presentation of data (Ease of Use)
- Additional areas for improvement

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Conclusions

This data, though limited, suggests that standardized history taking templates, like My Health Report, may have a positive impact on improving doctor-patient communication - including communication with caregivers - and patient/caregiver satisfaction. In order to better describe this impact, future studies should utilize a more standardized approach for patient recruitment and reporting, as well as look at opportunities for integrating the template into the EMR system.

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