Pain-Related Patient Satisfaction in Ambulatory Settings

Michele Farrington, BSN, RN, CPHON
Clinical Health Care Research Associate

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

• Michele Farrington – no conflicts of interest or disclosures to report.

Educational Objectives

• At the conclusion of this activity, participants should be able to:
  - Outline steps taken to implement a pain-related question on one academic medical center’s ambulatory patient satisfaction questionnaire.
  - Participate in an interactive discussion on pain-related patient satisfaction for patients seen in ambulatory settings.
Quality Improvement Initiative

• Purpose
  – Obtain baseline and ongoing monthly measurements of patient satisfaction related to pain in diverse ambulatory settings across an academic medical center

• Goal
  – Utilize this innovative strategy to maintain or improve pain-related care being delivered

Background

• Consumer satisfaction – important outcome measure of service-based industries
• Surveys – tool to quantify customer experience
• Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) survey
• Hospitals can survey on their own or use a survey vendor (e.g., Press Ganey Associates, Inc.)

Background (cont.)

• Association between satisfaction and quality – mixed and contradictory evidence
• Growing body of research – patient experience is a valuable measure of quality
• Some literature – patient satisfaction tools and financial incentives that focus on improving patients' pain care create motivation to overprescribe opioid medications
• Subjectivity of individual interpretation of quality of service provided; interpretation of patient experience ratings challenging

References:

CMS, 2018; Davidson et al., 2016; Farley et al., 2014; Iannuzzi et al., 2015; Price et al., 2014; Schoenfelder, 2012; Sequist et al., 2008; Shill et al., 2012; Solberg et al., 2011; Toma et al., 2009; Welch, 2010; Lee et al., 2008; Lembke, 2013; Manary et al., 2013; Mohammadreza, 2011; Sequist et al., 2008; Sack et al., 2011; Shill et al., 2012; Solberg et al., 2011
**Practice Change**

- Implement a new pain-related patient satisfaction metric for ambulatory patients
- Complement to pain screening and related follow-up by a licensed independent practitioner occurring at every ambulatory visit
- Coincided with an evidence-based practice initiative related to routinely offering interventions for needlestick pain to adult and pediatric ambulatory patients

**Process**

- March 2013 – Ambulatory Pain Committee began collaborating with the Office of Patient Experience
- Reviewed and discussed customized questions available from organization’s patient satisfaction surveys vendor
- Recommended inclusion of a new survey item – “Our Sensitivity to Your Pain”
- Final approval and sign-off obtained from Chief Nursing Officer and Chief Medical Officer
- Late March 2015 – item added to ambulatory survey

**Limitations**

- To date, not enough organizations use the same customized question – preventing external benchmarking
  - Internal benchmarking between ambulatory areas is occurring and “best practices” are shared
- “Personal Issues” section of survey versus “Nurse/Assistant” section
- Patients may not think of “discomfort” as “pain”
Results (cont.)

Medical Practice – All Clinic Aggregate
Question – Our Sensitivity to Your Pain

% Very Good for the Last 12 Quarters with Current Quarter to Date

- Increased number of free text pain-related comments by patients and family members

• "The shot was painless for the most part, and the nurse was very kind."  
  "The staff always asks how I am feeling and about my pain. They always listen carefully to my answers and pass these on to the doctors."  
  "Only received four days of pain medication."
Results Reporting

• Office of Patient Experience – quarterly pain-related patient satisfaction updates during Ambulatory Pain Committee meetings
• Update annually to Department of Nursing Pain Committee as part of divisional report
• Free text comments from patients and family members posted weekly on Ambulatory Pain Committee intranet site

Questions/Comments