Introduction

• **Problem:** Pediatric primary care practices are seeing a higher number of patients with mental health disorders\(^1\)
• Mental health disorders are considered a leading cause of disability in children and adolescents\(^2\)
• The prevalence of childhood mental health disorders indicates that 13% to 20% of children have been diagnosed with a mental disorder\(^3\)
• The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends routine screening for mental health disorders at well child visits\(^4\)

Purpose

• The purpose of this project was to improve the identification, diagnosis, and treatment of mental health disorders for children and adolescents in a pediatric primary care practice

Objectives:

1. Develop and implement a training program for the primary care providers (PCPs) to increase their knowledge and confidence to identify and treat common pediatric mental health disorders
2. Integrate the use of validated mental health screening tools during well-child visits
3. Create and distribute an updated resource and referral binder

Methods

• Project deemed not human subject research by University of Iowa IRB
• **Setting:** Mercy Pediatrics in Coralville, Iowa
• **Population:** PCPs within the practice

• PCPs recognized a need for mental health care
• Pre-implementation survey identified gaps in knowledge, comfort, practice, and referral sources

Evaluation

• Confidence improved across all questions on the survey administered to PCPs
• The results of the post-implementation survey indicated that the intervention did resonate well with the PCPs
• There has been a short term change in practice
• Sustainable change would need to be evaluated over time

Project limitations

• Due to limitations with the EHR, data was not available for pre-implementation practice
• Not all screening and referrals were made through the EHR
• Sample size was limited to 4 PCPs; 3 MD’s and 1 PA

Future Recommendations

• When implementing a screening program. System changes should include the process as well as alterations to the EHR
• Project can be replicated in other practices with a larger sample size

Conclusion

• Training and ongoing consultation is effective in encouraging providers to follow recommended guidelines and has demonstrated the ability to improve knowledge, confidence, and practice of PCPs in mental health
• Validated screening tools are likely to be utilized when easy to access during appointments
• Providers will use resources and referrals when system changes support their use
• This project has been presented as a poster at the University of Iowa Quality Improvement Symposium
• Plan to submit an abstract to the Iowa Nurse Practitioner Society Annual Fall Conference

References


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