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Improving Influenza Vaccination Rates and Understanding Reasons for Patient Refusal at Jefferson Hospital Ambulatory Practice

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**BACKGROUND**

- Despite CDC recommendations that everyone 6 months and older get flu vaccination, many eligible patients are not vaccinated.
- In 2014-2015 an estimated 106 million adults >18 years old were vaccinated, only 43.6% of the adult population.
- According to CDC and NCHS statistics in 2014 influenza and flu-related illness was in the top 10 leading causes of death in the US.
- Documented vaccination rates are rapidly becoming a quality metric for outpatient physician practices.

**AIM**

- Improve influenza vaccination rates for eligible patients at the Jefferson Hospital Ambulatory Practice to levels above the national average of 43.6% between October 2015 and March 2016 with universal screening and improved documentation.
- To characterize reasons for patients who did not receive vaccination.

**METHODS**

- Targets for intervention were identified as shown in Figure 1.
- Interventions
  - **Universal Screening:** All patients coming in for a routine visit between October 2015 and March 2016 were screened by Medical Assistants (MAs) with a pre-visit checklist regarding influenza vaccination status. Those who were unvaccinated were immediately offered vaccination.
  - **Increasing Patient Awareness:** Residents with Friday clinics discussed vaccination with patients who declined initial discussion with MA's.
  - **Improving Patient Education:** For those who declined, a "Misconceptions about Flu Vaccines" sheet was provided.
  - **Improving Documentation:** Vaccinations received during visit—as well as those received elsewhere—were documented within the practice’s EMR.
  - **Understanding Refusals:** Reviewed clinic notes and/or called patients to discuss reasons for deferring vaccination.

**RESULTS**

![Influenza Screening and Vaccination Rate](image)

- **Influenza Screening and Vaccination Rate**
  - Percentage of Patients: 97.1%, 90.1%, 93.2%, 92.3%, 89.7%, 87.9%, 85.9%
  - Percentage of Patients Vaccinated: 57.3%, 73.9%, 70.1%, 71.2%, 70.3%, 75.7%, 70.9%
  - Screening rate: 97.1%
  - Vaccination rate: 57.3%

- **Reasons Patients Were Not Vaccinated**
  - 40% of patients were not vaccinated due to insufficient efficacy/applicability or side effect profile.

**DISCUSSION**

- The influenza vaccination rates for JHAP the 2015-16 season was above the national average from the 2014-15 season.
- Even when controlled for patients with vaccine allergies or documented deferrals, documented vaccination rates were not at 100%, indicating need for better screening and documentation practices.
- Documentation issues were seen in survey data as well: 12% of "unvaccinated" patients surveyed had been vaccinated elsewhere.
- The majority of those contacted had no specific reason for refusal.
- One major barrier for both patients and resident physicians was a lack of time.
- 40% of patients in the surveyed group were fearful of side effects or doubted vaccination efficacy.

**LIMITATIONS**

- There was no available vaccination data from prior years for comparison.
- Screening intervention implemented clinic-wide, resident involvement limited to Friday clinic residents only. Vaccination rates reflect clinic-wide data.
- No ability to standardize discussion of vaccinations between resident physicians.
- Limited sample size which may not be representative of larger patient population.

**NEXT STEPS**

- Ongoing data collection regarding vaccination rates.
- Educational interventions which target areas of patient concerns, i.e. lack of efficacy/applicability or side effect profile.
- Efforts to improve documentation by office staff.