

Title

Formative Evaluation on Promoting Social Risk Screening among Cancer patients in Kaiser Permanente Southern California

Abstract

Background

Cancer is a cost condition that can lead to socioeconomic hardships and social risks. Addressing risks may be important to improve outcomes and reduce disparities. In 2022, Kaiser Permanente Southern California (KPSC) introduced a closed-loop social screening and referral system available to all members. Members can report social risks or needs through a survey available at the patient portal. However, uptake of the screening has been low. Active promotion strategies may be necessary to increase uptake especially among vulnerable groups like cancer patients.

Objective

Identify the minimum set of promotion strategies that significantly improves uptake of social risk screening (SRS) among new cancer patients at the Los Angeles Medical Center (LAMC) infusion clinic.

Methods

We used plan-study-do-act cycles to select, implement, and evaluate promotion strategies at the LAMC clinic. We started with strategies that require the least amount of staff involvement so that we can identify the set that will induce the lowest burden on human resources.

Results

By June 2024, the clinic has rolled out two strategies (automated text reminders, verbal reminders by medical assistants). Of the 320 new patients (January to June), 22 (7%) underwent screening, and 4/22 (18%) reported at least one need. Among the four, three chose to use the online directory of community resources while one opted self-referral to the call center.

The strategies did not significantly increase bi-weekly uptake with levels ranging from 2 (March) to 17% (May). Thus, the clinic decided to implement a third strategy where nurses will provide verbal reminders and handout education materials. Evaluation of this strategy will be conducted in quarter 4 2024.

Conclusion

Promotion through messages sent at time of appointment did not increase SRS uptake among LAMC cancer patients. Strategies that require more staff involvement may be needed to increase SRS uptake.