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Increasing Patient Knowledge of Obstructive Sleep Apnea and Sleep Studies

Billy Tran

Family Medicine Rotation July-August 2015

South Burlington Family Practice

Mentor: Dr. Whitney Calkins

Problem Identification

- ▶ Sleep apnea is a disorder when complete pauses in breathing lasting longer than 10 seconds
- ▶ Sleep apnea increase risk for stroke, death due to heart disease, impaired glucose tolerance
- ▶ 1 in 5 adults have mild OSA; 1 in 15 having moderate to severe OSA
- ▶ ~2% of children have OSA
- ▶ 80%-90% of patients with OSA are undiagnosed

Public Health Cost

- ▶ Undiagnosed patients used approximately \$200,000 more healthcare costs over 2 years
- ▶ Undiagnosed patients utilized 23-50% more medical resources
- ▶ Sleepiness, a side-effect of OSA, has a total economic cost of approximately \$43-\$56 billion
- ▶ Undiagnosed OSA may cause \$3.4 billion in additional medical costs in the US each year
- ▶ Patients with OSA have a 2-15 times more likely to be in a traffic accident
- ▶ Treating all sleep apnea could save \$11.1 billion in collision costs and 980 lives annually

Community Perspective

- ▶ Dr. Garrick Applebee, MD
 - ▶ Dr. Applebee is the Medical Director of the Vermont Regional Sleep Center
 - ▶ The Sleep Center helps patients with various conditions affecting their sleep, including OSA
 - ▶ Dr. Applebee supports increasing patient knowledge about OSA and sleep studies as he believes it'll increase overall health in the community
- ▶ Claire Barker, Sleep Center Clinic Technician
 - ▶ Claire Barker works as a technician at the Sleep Center and assists in the management of patients before, during and after a sleep study
 - ▶ She believes that patients don't seek out treatment for sleep disorders due to intimidation and confusion about the sleep study.
 - ▶ Ms. Barker supports this project's goal to increase patient understanding of the sleep study in hopes to increasing patient's desire to seek treatment

Intervention

- ▶ After discussion with preceptor, we decided an education tool for patients explaining sleep apnea and describing the steps of diagnosis and treatment would be most helpful
- ▶ The tool should be available long-term, thus a flyer was picked instead of a one-time presentation

Results

- ▶ Literature review on sleep apnea and its health effects
- ▶ Fly produced using information obtained and posted on the information board at the South Burlington Family Practice
- ▶ Electronic Copy left with office for future use

Effectiveness & Limitations

- ▶ Fly was placed in the patient waiting room in an area of high foot traffic
- ▶ Patients reading the flyer is a limiting variable
- ▶ Effectiveness of flyer would be reflected by patients requesting evaluation for sleep apnea, which can not be measured in the time allocated to the project

Future Recommendations

- ▶ Track the number of patients requesting sleep apnea evaluation
- ▶ Track the number of patients directly sent to a sleep study vs referral to a sleep specialist
- ▶ Encouraging physicians to screen to sleep apnea more frequently

References

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