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Primary Care Provider Perspectives on APSO Note Templates at the University of Vermont Health Network

Item Type	poster;article
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Download date	2026-06-12 08:03:32
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Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14849/9777

Primary Care Provider Perspectives on APSO Note Templates at the University of Vermont Health Network



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Background

- **Effective documentation** of patient encounters stands as a cornerstone of medicine. However, burdens of charting contribute to provider burnout and dissatisfaction.
- The SOAP (Subjective, Objective, Assessment, Plan) note template is considered the historical standard for capturing clinical information, but recently the **APSO (Assessment, Plan Subjective, Objective) note** has emerged as a novel approach to organize patient data.
- This study strives to **investigate Primary Care providers' experiences with the newly-introduced UVMHN APSO note template**, as well as examine redundancies, satisfaction, and the potential impact of the template on job satisfaction.

Methods

- Data was anonymously collected from **UVMHN Departments of General Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, and Pediatrics** providers utilizing a REDCap Survey, with questions co-opted from Lin, et al ¹, and analyzed utilizing Excel and SPSS. Additional qualitative data was collected, specific to a **Pre-operative APSO Note Template during a focus group** held at UVMHN Colchester Family Medicine and coded for themes and their frequencies through a meeting recording and transcript.
- **45 / 241 (18.6%)** providers responded to the survey, and 5 providers participated in the focus group.

Survey Results

Question	Easy	Neutral	Difficult
<i>Changing to writing in APSO format was:</i>	80.00%	16.67%	3.33%
<i>Writing in APSO Format is:</i>	90.00%	10.00%	0.00%

Table 1: Respondent answers by percent for difficulty of switching to and writing in APSO format among respondents who write APSO notes (n=30)

Question	Easier (or) Faster with APSO	Neutral	Easier (or) Faster with SOAP
<i>Finding clinically relevant data is:</i>	78.05%	17.07%	4.88%
<i>Browsing through notes is:</i>	78.57%	14.29%	7.14%
<i>The time it takes to write notes is:</i>	23.33%	73.33%	3.33%

Table 2: Respondent answers by percent for ease of finding clinical data when browsing APSO notes compared to SOAP (Row 1), speed of browsing notes in APSO format compared to SOAP (Row 2), and time spent charting (Row 3) in APSO format compared to SOAP.

As a consumer of APSO notes, I am:

■ Satisfied ■ Neutral ■ Dissatisfied



Figure 1: Proportion of consumers (n=39) of APSO note templates who express satisfaction, neutrality, or dissatisfaction with the template

As an author of APSO notes, I am:

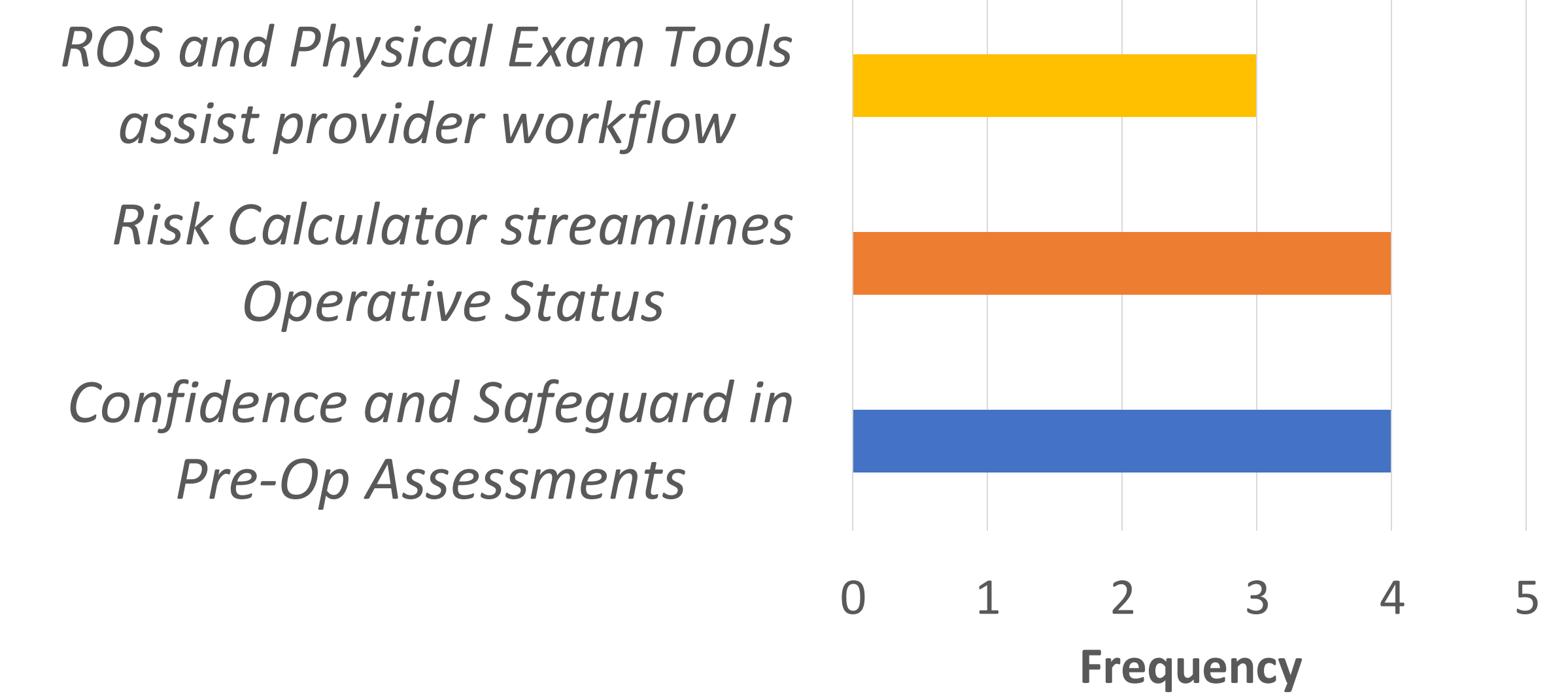
■ Satisfied ■ Neutral ■ Dissatisfied



Figure 2: Proportion of authors (n=30) of APSO note templates who express satisfaction, neutrality, or dissatisfaction with the template

Focus Group Results

Pre-Op APSO Template Benefits



Discussion

- Those surveyed are **very satisfied with APSO notes**. Users find writing and switching to APSO format very easy, and consumers remarked on the speed and ease of finding clinical data, while focus group data display the ability of APSO templates to streamline visit and instill providers with confidence.
- **However, subjective evaluation of time spent charting indicated little improvement with APSO.** APSO note templates may provide an opportunity to streamline both charting and reading notes, which are both sources of provider dissatisfaction², but more study to this end is required.
- Limitations of this study include a low response rate (18.6%) and lack of quantitative information (i.e., time spent physically writing notes) to confirm subjective responses.

References

1. Lin CT et al. Health care provider satisfaction with a new electronic progress note format: SOAP vs APSO format. JAMA Intern Med. 2013 Jan 28;173(2):160-2.
2. Hultman GM et al. Challenges and Opportunities to Improve the Clinician Experience Reviewing Electronic Progress Notes. Appl Clin Inform. 2019 May;10(3):446-453.