

Process and Impact Evaluation of an LGBTQ+ Student Run Free Clinic (SRFC) on Patient Experience

IM Gutierrez-Beasley (BS, SOM), K Mader (MD, MPH) Department of Family Medicine, University of Colorado School of Medicine, Aurora, CO.

Background

- 1 in 4 people who identify as transgender avoided seeking healthcare due to fear of discrimination or mistreatment due to their Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI)
- Lack of medical provider training and knowledge in LGBTQ+ healthcare has created mistrust of the medical system and lack of respect and confidence in provider competency
- Within the LGBTQ+ community, there are lower rates of self-esteem and decreased coping ability associated with higher rates of depression and anxiety
- Increased social support has been associated with improved overall physical and mental health
- Other barriers to care include lack of insurance coverage for gender affirming care and lack of access to general care and affirming providers

Methods

- Interventions:
 - Intake forms modified to be more inclusive
 - Bathroom signs changed from binary to unisex
 - Healthcare team's pronouns displayed on nametags
 - All providers and volunteers SafeZone trained and received a lecture on gender affirming care
- Mixed methods approach with a pre-post survey design:
 - Quantitative: Utilize frequencies, means and total scores of standard measures over time to identify trends
 - Qualitative data: Thematic analysis following an inductive approach by 2 or more coders who will identify common themes over time
- Patient Population:
 - English and Spanish speaking uninsured first-time visit patients
 - 18 years and older within Aurora, CO receiving primary care at the interprofessional DAWN SRFC that self-identify as LGBTQ+

Objective

- To evaluate the impact of a specialty LGBTQ+ Clinic on patient experience and resulting physical and mental health as well as to evaluate the process of implementation



Table 1: Process Measures

Previous Primary Care Provider supportive of LGBTQ+ identity
Barriers to accessing a supportive Primary Care Provider
Access to any Primary Care Doctor
Insurance
Healthcare team knowledge related to LGBTQ+ health
Patient positive and constructive feedback on what they liked about clinic and/or how to improve
Provider knowledge and resources for caring for patient's mental health
Provider years of professional experience working in LGBTQ+ Health
Provider personal and professional experiences contributing to comfort in treating LGBTQ+ patients

Outcome Measures

PHQ-2
GAD-2
PHQ-9
GAD-7
Overall health
Mental or Emotional Health
Self-Esteem
Coping Ability and Resilience
Healthcare team validation of identity/orientation
Healthcare team discrimination or assumption towards identity/orientation
Patient comfort disclosing SOGI
Healthcare team reaction to SOGI from patient perspective
Healthcare provider and patient shared decision making before decision is made
Patient perception if healthcare provider:
1) Is committed to providing the best care possible
2) Is sincerely interested in patient as a person
3) Is an excellent listener
4) Accepts the patient for who they are
5) Is truthful in health-related problems
6) Treats patient as an individual
7) Makes the patient feel worthy of their time and effort
8) Takes the time to listen during appointments
9) Allows the patient to feel comfortable talking about personal issues
10) Makes the patient feel better after seeing their provider
11) Considers the patient's need for privacy

Results

- Two years after establishment of the clinic, due to low patient volume, the clinic was reincorporated into the main DAWN SRFC with patients scheduled with providers more experienced in gender affirming care
- When study is hopefully completed in the future, results will include frequencies, means of Likert scale responses, average and total scores, and thematic analysis of free responses analyzed and reported over initial and follow-up visits over time
- Report and hope that providing an LGBTQ+ SRFC will improve access to care and to affirming and experienced providers, enhance the mental and physical health of our patients, and enhance patient experience within healthcare settings
- If the clinic remains incorporated, could collect prevalence data to identify patients who identify as LGBTQ+ to receive these surveys

Table 2: Measures and Means Scores Over Time

	Mean Score Visit #1 (n=)	Mean Score Visit #2 (n=)	Mean Score Visit #3 (n=)
• GAD-7 (Scores of 5,10, and 15 will be used as cut-offs for mild, moderate, and severe anxiety respectively)			
• PHQ-9 (Scores of 5,10, 15, and 20 will be used as cut-offs for mild, moderate, moderately severe, and severe depression respectively)			
• Self-Esteem Score (1=Not very true of me, 5=somewhat untrue of me)			
• Brief Resiliency Score (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree)			
• Self-Report Overall Health (1=Poor, 5=Excellent)			
• Self-Report Emotional Health (1=Poor, 5=Excellent)			
• Team Adequate Knowledge (1=Strongly Disagree, 5= Strongly Agree)			
**			

** Other process measures from **Table 1** would be included with average scores over time

Limitations

- Low patient volume: Likely related to the COVID-19 pandemic and advertising
- Communication on relaying actual surveys to the patients:
 - Change in leadership, research volunteers, and patient access to telehealth

Conclusions & Implications

- Unique: Study not only provides access to gender affirming and primary care in a safe, non-judgmental environment with trained providers to uninsured LGBTQ+ patients, but will also evaluate the process and impact of this clinic on patient experience and allow patients to actually provide input on their perception of the clinic
- Study will reveal what kind of trainings all clinic staff and providers need to provide quality affirming care and allow DAWN and all general primary clinics to adapt and create safe spaces for patients who identify as LGBTQ+
- The ideal goal is to have every provider and staff member be affirming, properly trained and knowledgeable in LGBTQ+ health in every general primary clinic

Pre-visit Surveys:

- Prior patient experience within healthcare
- Measure the progression of physical health, mental health, self-esteem, coping ability, and social support throughout the patient's continuous care and follow-up visits within the LGBTQ+ Clinic

Post-Visit Surveys:

- Experience during the visit
- If patient perceived the healthcare team as nondiscriminatory and validating
- If providers were perceived as knowledgeable, truthful, respectful, and allowed the patient to feel comfortable and listened to

Provider and Healthcare Team Surveys:

- Prior provider knowledge and experience