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Reducing Stigma regarding drug use in patients at a family medicine clinic

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Introduction: Addiction is a chronic, relapsing, treatable disease. People who use drugs have increased morbidity and mortality but are less likely to access healthcare. Stigma is one of the most significant barriers to healthcare for people who use drugs. By identifying and reducing stigma and misperceptions held by clinic staff, we can help patients feel more comfortable accessing the healthcare system and motivating for positive health behavior change.

Methods: Drugs and Drug Problems Perception Questionnaire (DDPPQ) is a validated survey tool used to evaluate confidence and attitude of staff regarding providing care for people who use drugs. We plan to administer this survey to all clinic staff to assess areas of improvement in care for patients who use drugs. The survey will be administered to staff at every level. Based on the results, a targeted education initiative will be created based on identified needs and disseminated to staff. A post-initiative DDPPQ survey will be re-administered to staff to evaluate for change.

Results: The study is still pending IRB approval. However, once approved, we intend to administer to all Family Medicine Clinic staff. While we have not yet collected results for this study, based on a literature review and previous clinical studies, we anticipate a need for education and training for clinic staff regarding treatment approaches for patients who use drugs including motivational interviewing and medication management. After the educational initiative is completed, we anticipate that participants will acknowledge substance use disorders (SUDs) as a treatable medication condition and develop greater confidence when working with patients with SUDs.

Discussion: The DDPPQ survey will increase our understanding of stigma toward people who use drugs. Developing initiatives that target stigma-reduction will improve patient experiences and health outcomes. Future projects will build on this study to create training programs to improve quality of patient care for those who use drugs. We intend to expand the scope of the project to include all of Los Angeles County Department of Health Services depending on the success of our training program.

Biography

Danny Lee is affiliated to Harbor-UCLA Family Medicine, USA. He is a recipient of many awards and grants for his valuable contributions and discoveries in major area of addiction research. His international experience includes various programs, contributions and participation in different countries for diverse fields of study. His research interests reflect in his wide range of publications in various national and international journals.

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