Doctor of Nursing Practice Project
Depression Protocol Implementation at a Nonprofit Clinic
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Background

- Depression is a common mood disorder that affects 264 million people worldwide (Ng et al., 2020).
- Depression is among the leading causes of disability in persons 15 years and older (United States Preventive Services Task Force [USPSTF], 2016).
- Economic costs to society include decreased work productivity and increased health service use (Kahalnik et al., 2019).
- The main access point for health care is often primary care; approximately 3% of patients presenting for initial primary care visits are screened for depression (Jackson & Machen, 2019).
- Treatment of adults with depression, identified through screening in primary care settings, with medications or psychotherapy, decreases clinical morbidity (USPSTF, 2016).

Purpose

- Determine if patient health questionnaires (PHQ2 and PHQ9) are effective in identifying patients with depression.
- Prepare nonprofit clinic staff to assess, identify, and treat patients with depression.

Method

- Implemented universal patient depression screening with the PHQ2 tool at a nonprofit clinic.
- Identified depression severity with the PHQ9 tool for patients who scored a 3 or higher on the PHQ2.
- Provided treatment for patients using an algorithm following epocrates© guidelines.
- Compared PHQ9 scores pre and post treatment to assess for effectiveness of algorithm epocrates© guidelines.

Results

- 55 patients screened with the PHQ2 tool.
- 9 patients were identified with a form of depression using the PHQ9.
- 2 patients had PHQ9 score improvement after treatment using the algorithm.
- 7 patients either did not follow guidelines or were not available for follow-up.

Discussion

- 57% of the patients seen during project implementation were screened for depression using the PHQ2.
- Project limitations included:
  - ✓ Inadequate staffing
  - ✓ Staff turnover
  - ✓ Noncompliance
  - ✓ Stigma related to depression screening/diagnosis
- Universal screening with a PHQ2 assessment tool is an effective and efficient way to screen for depression in the primary care setting.
- The PHQ9 tool provides a way to identify the severity of depression in less than five minutes.

Conclusion

- Nonprofit clinics bridge the healthcare gap treating vulnerable populations.
- Universal depression screening in primary care increases identification of patients at risk for depression.
- Recommendations:
  - ✓ Add the PHQ2 and PHQ9 tools to the electronic medical record to facilitate universal depression screening, severity assessment, and treatment efficacy.

References available upon request.