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Effect of Pre-visit Questionnaire on Improving Sexual Preference Documentation in a Radiation Oncology Clinic

Introduction: Disparities in access to and quality of care lead to preventable adverse health outcomes in sexual and gender minority (SGM) patients. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) designated SGM as a health disparity population in 2016. This project aims to improve the documentation of sexual preference in the radiation oncology electronic medical record (EMR) to better identify SGM patients and assess the unique side effect profile of SGM patients undergoing radiotherapy.

Methods: A patient-facing pre-visit questionnaire was designed using a My Health at Vanderbilt (MHAV) form and answers were recorded as the patient's "Sexual Orientation" under existing Epic demographic functionality. This MHAV questionnaire was assigned to all outpatient consultation visits in the radiation oncology department to allow patients to self-report their sexual preference. To evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention, the rate of sexual orientation documentation three months prior to questionnaire implementation on 4/17/24 were assessed and compared to the rate of documentation three months after implementation.

Results: The intervention increased sexual orientation documentation from 7/544 (1.3%) patients to 248/481 (51.6%) patients measured over three-month periods before and after implementation ($p < 0.000001$).

Conclusions: Pre-visit MHAV questionnaire implementation improved the EMR documentation of sexual preference in new consults seen in the radiation oncology clinic. Better identifying and recording SGM patients in the EMR will allow further evaluation of the unique issues impacting the health and outcomes of LGBTQ patients undergoing radiotherapy.