PROJECT INFORMATION

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Adding a Teachable Moment Approach to a Team-Based Primary Care Ask-Advise-Connect Approach for Tobacco Cessation

Principal investigator

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Organization

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What was the research about?

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. Primary care teams, such as doctors, nurses, and medical assistants, can help patients quit using tobacco. But clinic staff don't always have the support they need to talk with patients about tobacco or refer patients to quitlines. Quitlines are services people can call to get telephone counseling for tobacco addiction.

In this study, the research team compared two ways to help primary care clinic staff identify patients who use tobacco and offer them help:

- **Ask-Advise-Connect, or AAC.** AAC changes the role of medical assistants to ask patients about tobacco use. They also give brief advice and use the electronic health record, or EHR, to refer patients who want help to a quitline.
- **AAC plus the Teachable Moments Communication Process, or TMCP.** TMCP trains clinicians, like doctors and nurses, on how to talk with patients based on their concerns about tobacco use.

What were the results?

One year after AAC changes happened at the clinics, medical assistants were more likely to

- Ask patients if they used tobacco
- Advise patients to quit tobacco

- See how ready patients were to quit

Also, patients at these clinics were more likely to accept a referral to a quitline.

After adding TMCP, patients at the clinics were more likely to receive advice to quit tobacco.

Clinicians only used TMCP with 8 percent of patients. When they used TMCP, clinicians were more likely to prescribe medicine to help quit tobacco. Other outcomes did not improve.

Who was in the study?

The study used EHR data from 224,079 visits by 176,061 adult patients. Patients were from eight clinics in one health system in the Cleveland area. Of these patients, 50 percent were white, 46 percent were African American, and 4 percent were other races; 12 percent were Hispanic or Latino. Also, 57 percent were ages 35–65, 70 percent were women, and 26 percent were tobacco users.

What did the research team do?

The research team first worked with the health system to make changes to their EHR system, including

- Adding an electronic referral between clinics and a quitline in Ohio
- Adding AAC guidance to EHR systems

- Using a team-based approach to tobacco screening and training staff to use the new EHR system

Next, the research team trained clinicians in TMCP.

The research team looked at patient care at the clinics at three time periods: before making any changes, after putting AAC in place in clinics, and after adding TMCP.

Clinicians, clinic staff, Ohio's health department staff, quitline staff, and patients who use tobacco helped design the study and review results.

What were the limits of the study?

Only eight percent of clinicians used TMCP to talk with patients. Results might differ if more clinicians used this approach.

Future research could look at ways to increase how often clinicians use TMCP.

How can people use the results?

Clinics and health systems can use the results when deciding how to help patients quit tobacco.

To learn more about this project, visit www.pcori.org/Flocke334.