

How the Linkage Between Care Process and Outcomes Varies by Comorbidity

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Description

Busy frontline clinicians face challenges in delivering quality healthcare for patients with multiple chronic conditions. Better clinical processes of care are known to be associated with better health outcomes. This study analyzed the extent to which comorbidities and age influence the observed relationships between processes and outcomes and sought to make explicit the consequences of applying recommendations designed for individual diseases to patients with multiple conditions.

Specific Aims

1. Analyze whether burden of illness predicts quality of care process scores.
2. Examine how other factors, including patient age, demographics, and use of health services, predict quality of care process scores.
3. For health outcomes that are known to improve with better care, analyze the extent of variability that results from comorbidity, patient characteristics, and use of services.
4. Develop strategies to refine quality measures for patients with multiple comorbidities and other aspects of complexity to promote care processes that are most beneficial to patients.

Findings

Even after adjusting for age, gender, race/ethnicity, and number of hospitalizations and doctors' visits, patients with a greater burden of illness receive a higher proportion of needed care than do patients with a lower burden of illness.

Implications

Physicians are rising to the challenge of caring for the sickest patients, but are missing opportunities in caring for chronically ill patients whose conditions are less severe. These findings can guide

Main Objective

Examine how comorbidities and age influence the observed relationships between clinical processes and health outcomes.

Chronic Conditions Considered

Diabetes
Asthma
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
Ischemic heart disease

Preventive Service Considered

This project did not address a specific clinical preventive service.

Study Design, Data Sources & Sample Size

Observational epidemiological study
939 chronically ill patients from 39 medical organizations who allowed detailed medical record review

Strategies Addressed from the HHS Strategic Framework on Multiple Chronic Conditions

- 1.B. Define appropriate health outcomes
- 4.C. Increase clinical health research

How the Linkage Between Care Process and Outcomes Varies by Comorbidity (Continued)

staffing decisions and health care delivery structures on ways to best support high-quality care for patients across the spectrum of illness.

Publications (as of September 2013)

Publications currently in preparation.

Posters and Presentations

Kahn KL. Delivering high quality care for patients with multi-morbidity: Are we missing opportunities? UCLA Division of General Internal Medicine & Health Services Research Noon Conference; 2010 Oct 1; Los Angeles, CA.

Kahn KL. What to do first: optimizing and prioritizing health care for complex patients. Panel at: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Annual Meeting; 2010 Sept 27; Bethesda, MD.

Kahn KL. Complex relationships: burden of illness, process of care, and outcomes. Presentation at: Society of General Internal Medicine Annual Meeting; 2010 May 1; Minneapolis, MN.

Kahn KL. Delivering high quality care for patients with comorbidity: are we missing opportunities? Presentation at: AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting; 2010 Jun 28; Boston, MA.