

Survey of healthcare providers on clinical technology and transition to electronic opioid risk assessments

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Purpose

The Screener and Opioid Assessment for Patients with Pain (SOAPP[®]) and the Current Opioid Misuse Measure (COMM[®]) are validated, paper and pencil tools to help assess opioid risk for patients being considered for and currently on opioid therapy. As increasing numbers of healthcare settings are adopting Electronic Medical Records (EMRs), it is critical for these tools to be available in an electronic format. The purpose of this study is to learn about the perceived benefits and barriers to adopting and implementing electronic, self-scoring versions of the SOAPP and the COMM in clinical settings from healthcare providers.

Method

An online survey of 79 healthcare providers (physicians, nurses, psychologists, and other disciplines) was conducted to obtain a better understanding of the level of technology currently being used in clinical settings, current use of opioid risk assessments, and to identify the perceived benefits and barriers of electronic versions of the SOAPP and COMM assessments. The participants were recruited from PainEDU.org, a comprehensive Web-based resource for clinicians offering the latest scientific information about pain treatment, through a notice on the site's weekly newsletter. The participants were asked to access the survey by clicking on a link provided in the newsletter. The survey was conducted over a 5-week period.

Results

Benefits: 64.7% of respondents thought that availability of monitoring recommendations based on the assessment score would be the most beneficial feature of the electronic SOAPP and/or COMM tools, followed by automatically calculated scores (58.8%) and integration into an EMR (52.9%).

Additionally, 41.2% of respondents felt that streamlined clinical workflow was an also an important benefit. In total, 87.2% of respondents felt that an electronic version of the SOAPP and/or COMM would either improve, or not hinder, existing workflow efficiency.

Barriers: Availability of technical resources was selected by 56.9% of respondents as the greatest barrier to implementing electronic versions of the SOAPP and/or COMM in their clinics, followed by learning curve (43.1%) for using the new format. Only 12.8% of respondents considered workflow disruption to be a barrier to implementation.

Conclusions

Traditional paper records in the healthcare system are being replaced by Electronic Medical Records (EMRs). The existence of the EMR will impact clinical workflow, and paper-centric workflows will transition to digital and electronic media. Based on this survey's results, the availability of electronic versions of the SOAPP and COMM tools will potentially offer easy integration of the assessments and results into a patient's electronic record. Most importantly, immediate access to validated opioid risk assessment scores of chronic pain patients and monitoring recommendations will likely streamline current processes, and support an interdisciplinary treatment approach, allowing for improved pain management.