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Clinical Investigation

Category: Abstract Submission

Poster Session I - Breakout 1: Ethics/Pain/Social Determinants of Health

Effect of SARS-COV2 on Adolescent PHQ-9 Screening Result



Thursday, October 14, 2021



4:00pm – 4:05pm US CT

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Background: The SARS-COV2 pandemic created numerous stressors for adolescents. Prior studies have shown an increased risk for self-reported depression symptoms in pediatric patients after trauma. .

Objectives: This study compares the rates of newly diagnosed adolescent depression, and self-reported depression symptoms, in an outpatient clinic during the pandemic as compared to pre-pandemic.

Design/Methods: This IRB approved study involved a retrospective chart review of adolescents aged 12-17 who attended an academic clinic between January 1, 2018 and March 22, 2020. Included were adolescents aged 12 to 17 who completed a PHQ-9 questionnaire at their annual wellness visit, without a prior diagnosis or documented treatment for a mood disorder. If multiple patient encounters occurred in the pre-pandemic period the most recent was utilized. Exclusion criteria included a prior diagnosis or current therapy for a mood disorder, or incomplete PHQ-9 questionnaire. Charts were reviewed for age, gender, race, PHQ-9 questionnaire results and a diagnosis of depression; standard PHQ-9 criteria were used to identify presence and severity of depression. The pandemic data consisted of the same data points collected between March 23, 2020 and June 2, 2021 during the shelter-in-place order.

Results: Three hundred eighty-one patient charts were reviewed with 250 meeting inclusion criteria from 233 distinct patients (53.6% female; 55.4% African American; 24.9% Caucasian, and mean age 14.4). During the pre-pandemic period, 61 (29.6%) of the 206 patients had a PHQ-9 score positive for depression. Depression severity among these 61 patients was: 42 (68.9%) mild, 13 (21.3%) moderate, 5 (8.2%) moderate-severe, 1 (1.6%) severe. During the pandemic period, 13 (29.6%) of the 44 patients had a PHQ-9 score positive for depression. Depression severity among these was: 10 (77%) mild, 2 (15%) moderate and 1 (8%) severe. Among teens who screened positive for depression and completed questions assessing symptom severity, 30/53 (56.6%) in the pre-pandemic and 10/11 (90.9%) in the pandemic period reported symptoms causing difficulty in daily activities.

Conclusion: This study did not show an increased incidence of new onset depression amongst adolescents in the outpatient clinic during the pandemic compared to the pre-pandemic time period utilizing PHQ-9 screening. However, those who screened positive for depression during the pandemic period reported more difficulty in performing daily activities.