

Introduction

Affecting approximately 40 million adults in the United States, anxiety disorders are the most common form of mental illness among adults. 6.8 million adults, or 3.1% of the population, in the United States suffers from Generalized Anxiety Disorder (Facts&Statistics, 2018).

GAD remains clinically undiagnosed and under treated.

Background & Significance

Anxiety Disorders accounted for 4% of the global population equating to approximately 275 million people in 2016

GAD ranked 7th on health problems in 2017 that caused the most disability in the U.S

GAD is one of the most common mental health disorders seen in primary care (7% of patients)

58% of those with GAD go untreated

GAD is associated with reduced quality of life, impaired social functioning, loss of productivity, high utilization of healthcare resources

GAD is associated with an increased cost with approximately \$42 billion annually or 1/3 of U.S. total health expenditures

GAD is not a requirement to screen in the primary care setting, while Depression is mandated.

Aim

The aim of the DNP project was to improve early detection of Generalized Anxiety Disorder in the primary care setting by routine screening of adult patients with the Generalized Anxiety Disorder -7 (GAD-7) screening tool

Theoretical Framework

The six step Model for Evidence-Based Practice Change was applied to develop, implement, and evaluate the GAD-7 Scale for screening of adults in the primary care setting.

Methodology

Design Pre-/Post Intervention Design
Setting Primary Care offices in Freehold, NJ & Budd Lake, NJ
Sample Screening of 50 patients 18-64 years of age regardless of their chief complaint

Exclusion Criteria Patients who had a history or prior diagnosis of GAD
Interventions

Began with provider education on the purpose & benefits of the GAD-7 in primary care
Chart review was conducted for the month prior to the implementation, August 2019-September 2019, to determine how many patients were diagnosed with GAD prior to the use of the screening tool
Study interventions included administering the GAD-7 screening tool to patients upon their arrival to the medical office
Patients filled out the screening tool & those who scored an 8 or higher were provided with educational materials on GAD as well as treatment resources

Outcome Measures

The number of patients screened for GAD
The score of each patient's screening tool
The number of patients receiving patient education
The number of patients who were positively screened for Generalized Anxiety Disorder within 1 month compared to the previous month

GAD-7 item (GAD-7) Scale

Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-Item (GAD-7) scale				
Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?	Not at all	Several days	Over half the days	Nearly every day
1. Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge	0	1	2	3
2. Not being able to stop or control worrying	0	1	2	3
3. Worrying too much about different things	0	1	2	3
4. Trouble relaxing	0	1	2	3
5. Being so restless that it's hard to sit still	0	1	2	3
6. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable	0	1	2	3
7. Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen	0	1	2	3
Add the score for each column				
Total Score (add your column scores) =				

If you checked off any problems, how difficult have these made it for you to do your work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people?

Scoring GAD
Not difficult at all _____
Somewhat difficult _____
Very difficult _____
Extremely difficult _____
Calculated by response categories of: "not at all," "several days," "over half the days," and "nearly every day."

GAD-7 total score for the seven items ranges from 0 to 21.

0-4: minimal anxiety
5-9: mild anxiety
10-14: moderate anxiety
15-21: severe anxiety

Results – Pre Intervention

240 charts reviewed at the Budd Lake office
220 charts reviewed at the Freehold office
Pre intervention chart review data was consistent between both locations

Pre- Intervention Demographic Data

Characteristics	Budd Lake (n=240)	Freehold (n=220)
Gender		
Male	54.17%	52.73%
Female	45.83%	47.27%
Race		
Caucasian	58.33%	62.73%
Age		
50-59	15%	26.36%
60-69	34%	24.55%
Marital Status		
Married	44.17%	65.45%
Education		
Bachelor Degree	41.25%	31.82%
Employment Status		
Full Time Employment	60.83%	65%
Reason for Visit		
Physical	35%	15.91%

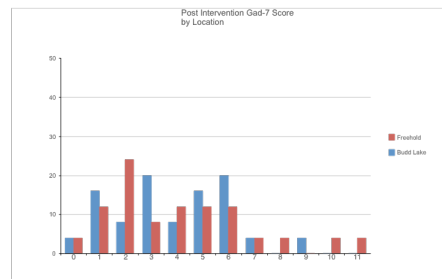
Pre- Intervention Chart Review: Positive for GAD

Characteristics	Budd Lake (n=18)	Freehold (n=13)
Gender		
Male	55.56%	53.85%
Female	44.44%	46.15%
Race		
Caucasian	66.67%	46.15%
Age		
50-59	33.33%	46.15%

Post intervention findings show very similar demographics between the 2 sites

Post Intervention Demographic Data

Characteristics	Budd Lake (n=25)	Freehold (n=25)
Gender		
Male	32%	52%
Female	68%	48%
Race		
Caucasian	76%	64%
Age		
50-59	32%	40%
Marital Status		
Married	64%	56%
Education		
Bachelor Degree	56%	52%
Employment Status		
Full Time Employment	84%	84%
Reason for Visit		
Physical	24%	28%



Results – Post Intervention

Of the 50 patients screened, 8% of patients resulted in a score of 8 or higher, which prompted a discussion with the provider during their office visit.

Despite their GAD-7 scores, all patients were provided with a handout on identifying GAD, causes, & treatment recommendations.

Post Intervention GAD-7 Results by Location

GAD-7 Anxiety Severity Scale	Budd Lake Percentage (%)	Freehold Percentage (%)
Minimal Anxiety (GAD-7 score 0-4)	96%	80%
Mild Anxiety (GAD-7 score 5-9)	44%	32%
Moderate Anxiety (GAD-7 score 10-14)	0%	8%
Severe Anxiety (GAD-7 score 15-21)	0%	0%

Jersey, the patient demographics and results of the GAD-7 were largely similar between the two locations.

Discussion

Limitations

Small sample size
Time Constraints
Self Report
Stigma
Cancelled or rescheduled appointments

Implications

Clinical Practice

- GAD-7 identifies more patients with GAD compared to usual care
- More research needed to determine whether early identification & treatment results in better outcomes

Economic Implications

- Implementing the GAD-7 screening tool into primary care visits is of no cost to the practice
- Utilizing the GAD-7 screening tool in primary care may reduce healthcare costs by increasing early detection & initiating early treatment for GAD

Quality & Safety

- Screening for anxiety improves early diagnosis, prompt treatment, & long-term outcomes
- GAD-7 may be used for symptom monitoring

Research & Policy

- By identifying the need for screening, practice guidelines can be established & quality enhanced

Contact Information

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