E-Consult News

March 2020

Issue Contents

Patient Satisfaction

Similar Patient Satisfaction from E-Consults and In-Person Referrals

As e-consult adoption expands, so does research demonstrating patient understanding of and satisfaction. A newly published study, which documents patient surveys conducted by AAMC's project CORE, delivers valuable insights into patients' awareness of e-consults and compares these experiences with those of in-person referrals.

For the study, surveys were emailed to patients within 2 to 6 weeks after their primary care encounters. Of the 8087 patients respondents, 11.6% had e-consults and 88.4% had in-person

referrals. Both groups reported similar levels of satisfaction with their experience as well as their understanding of specialist recommendations:
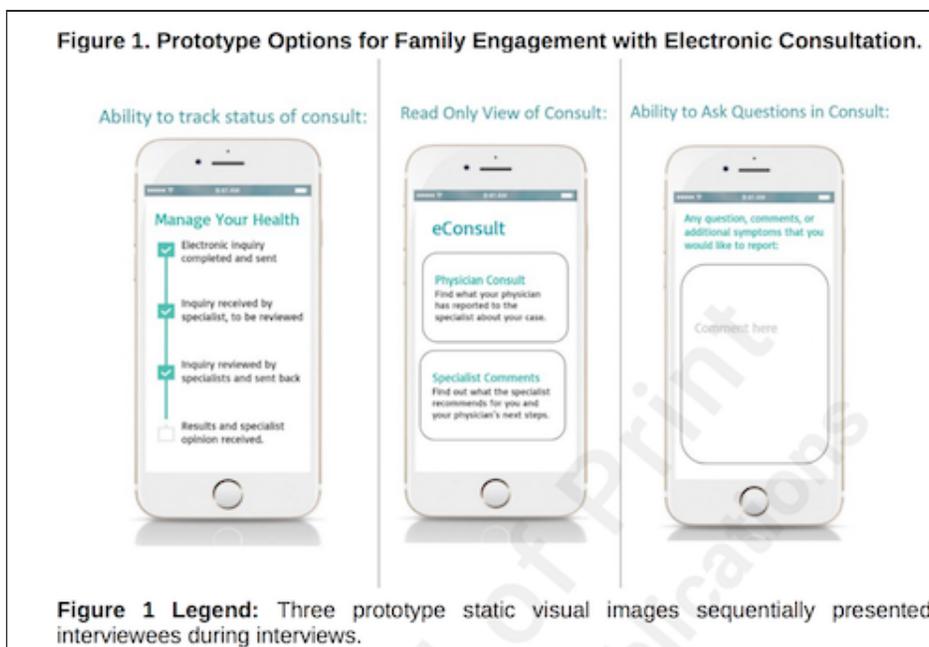
- 81.4% of e-consult patients and 81.9% of referral patients reported satisfaction with the specialists' recommendations
- 97% of e-consult patients and 95% of referral patients agreed that specialists' recommendations were clearly explained

This comparative research counters provider concerns that patients would perceive e-consults as a low quality care.

New Study Assesses Caregiver Perspectives on Pediatric E-Consult Use

To assess patient perspectives on pediatric e-consult perspectives, researchers at the University of Pittsburg School of Medicine (UPMC) interviewed the caregivers of 20 UPMC Children's Hospital Primary Care Clinic patients. The interviews focused on caregiver views of e-consult benefits as well as preferences for "family involvement." These elements included access to e-consult status, read-only access the dialog between PCPs and specialists and the ability to add their own questions to the dialog.

The assessment found that caregivers agree that e-consults would reduce burdens such as travel time, time away from school or work, and wait time for specialist input. However, caregivers also expressed concern that e-consults would eliminate the traditional in-person pediatric "care triad" that includes the specialist, caregiver and primary care provider.

Figure 1. Prototype Options for Family Engagement with Electronic Consultation.

Figure 1 Legend: Three prototype static visual images sequentially presented interviewees during interviews.

The study's authors recommend that pediatric care providers considering the use of e-consults should "incorporate parent perspectives" in the design of their electronic consultation process to help improve acceptance and uptake of pediatric e-consult use.

Access

In Nigeria, E-Consults Bridge Severe Gaps to Subspecialty Care

A recent assessment of e-consult implementation in Nigeria found high levels of use for access to Obstetrics/Gynecology, Pediatric specialties and subspecialties, and Dermatology. While Nigerian GPs, who provide care to Africa's most populous nation, spend more time submitting e-consults than their American counterparts they still report high levels of satisfaction and education.

Through their use of e-consults, GPs reported they were able to reduce "unnecessary services" and improve patient care. The assessment concludes that e-consults have a "tremendous potential…to build capacity for clinicians in nations where subspecialty care services are scarce."

E-Consults Increase Medicaid Patient Access to Endocrinologists

Endocrinologist access is a specific challenge for medically underserved populations requiring endocrinology care. A retrospective study shows that e-consult's ability to increase care access is a very promising solution to this major challenge.

The study found that before e-consult implementation only 37.8% of endocrinology referrals for Medicaid patients were completed. One year after e-consult implementation, referral completions increased to 59.9%. In addition to noting improved patient care, 89% of the PCPs indicated satisfaction with e-consults and 53% reported that they did not increase work burden.

Because both Medicaid patients and providers benefit from their use, e-consults demonstrate a strong solution to the current challenges of our health care systems", note the authors including the Weitzman Institute's Daren Anderson, MD.

Events

E-Consult Workgroup March Webinar: Colorado Kaiser Permanente Community Health Safety Net Specialty Care Program

Please join us for the March E-Consult Workgroup webinar on 3/4 from 12 to 1 p.m. Pacific Time. This month's webinar will feature Lynnette Namba, Chris Fellenz, MD and John Riopelle, MD. of Kaiser Permanente, Colorado, speaking on their safety net specialty care program.

- Webinar: https://zoom.us/j/930145409
- Dial-in: +16699006833,,930145409# US

View past Workgroup webinar presentations here.

Save the Date! E-Consult Workshop 11/16/20

The E-Consult Workgroup is proud to host its 6th annual E-Consult Workshop on November 16th at The California Endowment in Sacramento. The event will engage primary and specialty care providers, public and commercial payers, academic researchers and technology innovators.

We invite organizations to sponsor the E-Consult Workgroup and support this dynamic event. For more information about our sponsorship opportunities, view the program details or contact us at electronic_consult@bluepathhealth.com. Thanks to our initial sponsors below:

Policy

Proposed E-Consult Legislation

Two new state and federal bills that would provide funding for e-consult implementation have been introduced. Updates on these and other California telehealth policies will be covered during the next California Telehealth Policy Coalition call.

State

California A.B. 2164 Creates the E-Consult Services and Telehealth Assistance Program within DHCS to award grants to health centers, networks and RHCs to implement and test programs

- Introduced February 2020
- Hearing date TBD

Federal

STAR Act **(**H.R.5190, Harder)
Provides funding for telehealth pilots across the U.S., including for e-consults.

- Introduced November 2019
- Referred to Committee on Energy and Commerce

Stay up to date on e-consult news, research and policy with our monthly E-Consult News.
Subscribe.

The E-Consult Toolkit and monthly E-Consult News are authored and maintained
by BluePath Health.
Funding and support are provided by the
California Health Care Foundation,
with thanks to Blue Shield of California Foundation for past support.
To submit questions, content or share news updates contact us.

Opt out of future issues of E-Consult News.