

MAKING A "PACT" TO MANAGE OUR COMPLEX PATIENTS

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Background

Comprehensive patient care requires the collective skill and partnership of multiple health professions. Criticisms of our current healthcare system include fragmented medical care, lack of coordination across healthcare providers and medical care stymied by socioeconomic determinants of health. Interprofessional teams are uniquely equipped to address these challenges. However, optimizing care provided by such teams requires developing and integrating the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of each discipline into the clinical setting to maximize benefits for our most vulnerable and high-utilizing patients. As a part of the Houston Center of Excellence in Primary Care Education (CoEPCE) at the Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center (MEDVAMC), an interprofessional training program comprised of psychology, pharmacy, social work, NP and MD Internal Medicine residents with associated faculty, we implemented Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) Intensive Care Unit (ICU), an interdisciplinary complex patient case conference.

Objectives

The aim of this study is to qualitatively assess faculty and learner perceptions of PACT ICU's impact on quality of care and personal and professional development.

Methods

We adapted PACT ICU, initially developed by the Boise CoEPCE, to fit within the local context at the MEDVAMC. Every two weeks, a team member is assigned as the session leader who is responsible for identifying and presenting a patient whose acute or chronic medical needs, psychological comorbidities, social circumstances, or pattern of healthcare utilization pose an obstacle to achieving optimal health and wellness. The interdisciplinary team discusses and identifies an action plan that is implemented by specified team members based on patient needs. These action plans are documented in the electronic medical record. We plan to qualitatively assess faculty and learner perceptions of PACT ICU's impact on quality of care and personal and professional development through an open-ended survey administered to past participants in PACT ICU sessions this academic year.

Results

Preliminary results suggest that participation in PACT ICU increases interprofessional team members' knowledge of medical and social services present at the VA, understanding of interdisciplinary team roles, confidence involving team members of other professional backgrounds in routine patient care, and may improve quality of care for complex patients.

Discussion

Medically complex patients often require care from providers of multiple health professional backgrounds to achieve meaningful change in health outcomes. With the rise of interprofessional curricula amid ongoing challenges in current medical care delivery, PACT ICU offers a scalable model for enhancing multidisciplinary approaches to care in order to more effectively meet patients' comprehensive needs.