Medicare Access and Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA) and Depression Screening: A Quality Improvement Project

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**Background**

- **MACRA was enacted by Congress in April 2015**
- Approximately 4% of primary care patients are screened for depression.
- The US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends screening for depression at the primary care level for all adults.

**Objectives**

- **Aim 1:** Advancing knowledge of primary care providers and staff in a small primary care setting on MACRA
- **Aim 2:** Increase the proportion of patients in the practice who receives the PHQ-9 depression screening

**Methods/Measures**

**Program Design**

- Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) rapid cycle quality improvement project
- Provider and staff education and training on MACRA and depression screening

**Setting**

- Privately owned primary care practice with 6 providers serving adults on the west coast of Florida.

**Measurement**

- Electronic Health Records (EHR) analytics software capturing the number of patients screened for depression 30 days pre and post implementation of project
- A survey instrument created for this project by project coordinators was used to ascertain gains in knowledge

**EHR Workflow Analysis**

- Click on Adult Generic Health Form
- Click on Review Tab
- Click on Depression Under Preventive Service
- Document Score as Test Field

**Phase 1 – Pre and Post Implementation Knowledge Gains**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Pre-Test (Correct)</th>
<th>Post-Test (Correct)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M 0.46</td>
<td>M 0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SD 0.05345</td>
<td>SD 0.07559</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minimum 0.40</td>
<td>Minimum 0.80</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Maximum 0.50</td>
<td>Maximum 1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Skewness -0.29</td>
<td>Skewness -0.46</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kurtosis -1.92</td>
<td>Kurtosis -0.90</td>
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</table>

**Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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<th>Pre-Test Score</th>
<th>Post-Test Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Ranks</td>
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<td>4.00</td>
<td>28.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative Ranks</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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**Chi-Square Test**

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<th>Screened</th>
<th>Marginal Row Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-Implementation</td>
<td>791 (604.46)</td>
<td>9 (195.54)</td>
<td>800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-Implementation</td>
<td>396 (582.54)</td>
<td>375 (188.46)</td>
<td>771</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marginal Column Totals</td>
<td>1187</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>1571</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The chi-square statistic is 479.9168. The p-value is < 0.00001. The result is significant at p < 0.05

**Discussion**

- **Key Strategies for Implementing MACRA in Small Practices**
  - Avoid delay, prepare for MACRA now
  - "Pick Your Pace"
  - Work as a team
  - Designate a "champion"
  - Learn and understand MACRA
  - Outline a strategy, plan comprehensively but implement incrementally
  - Identify and select high-performing Merit-Based Incentives Payment System (MIPS) measures that best fits the practice
  - Decide how to report
  - Check with EHR vendor and adopt a certified EHR
  - Document accurately in EHR
  - Pay attention to deadlines
  - Maintain focus on quality patient care

- **Implications for Practice**
  - Gains in depression screening rates were primarily increased by one provider
  - Proportion of patients screened were minimal depression (35%), no depression (29%), Mild depression (21%), Moderate depression (10%), Moderately Severe Depression (3%) and Severe depression (2%)

- **Limitations**
  - Small sample size for the single two-hour education and training session
  - Implementation at a single practice site
  - Limited participation by staff and provider due to natural disaster

- **Acknowledgements**
  - Sincere thanks and gratitude to our Project Faculty Supervisors, Melanie J. Michael, DNP, MS, FNP-C, CPHQ, FNAP and Cheryl Wilson DNP, ARNP, ANP-BC for their dedication and persistence to our personal, professional, and project successes
  - We would also like to thank the healthcare providers and staff of at the practice location where the project was conducted.

- **References**
  - References available upon request
  - IRB approval (#00031085)