Contraceptive Counseling for Adolescents in the Emergency Department: A Novel Curriculum for Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants

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Many adolescents use the emergency department (ED) as their primary source of health care. As a result, the ED serves as a unique opportunity to reach adolescents. Although many adolescent visits to the ED are related to reproductive health, ED providers report barriers to providing this care, including lack of training. Nurse practitioners (NPs) and physician assistants (PAs) serve a vital role in the provision of consistent care to adolescents in the ED. The purpose of this study was to create a curriculum to train NPs and PAs at two pediatric institutions to provide patient-centered contraceptive counseling to adolescents in the pediatric ED regardless of their chief complaint. To do this, we created a four-part webinar followed by an in-person training session. Participants completed training and then conducted counseling sessions with adolescents in the ED. Counseling sessions were recorded and reviewed for fidelity to delineated counseling principles, and data from post-counseling surveys were collected. 27 NPs and PAs completed the training and conducted 99 counseling sessions. Nearly all sessions incorporated essential content and communication principles such as shared decision making (90%) and teach-back methods (75%). All NPs and PAs who participated reported satisfaction and subjective improvement in knowledge and competence from the training. This curriculum offers a novel and feasible approach to train NPs and PAs to deliver patient-centered contraception counseling to adolescents in the ED setting, and it can serve as a model for how to educate different providers to incorporate reproductive health education into the busy ED visit.

Journal:

Journal of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners
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