

# Integration of Geriatric Mental Health Screening into Primary Care: Are Patients Satisfied? (Preliminary Results)

Stephanie L. Samuels

Weill Cornell Medical College, Class of 2012

Medical Student Training in Aging Research (MSTAR) Program

Mentors:

Ronald Adelman, MD

Risa Breckman, LCSW

August 13, 2009

# Background

- In 1999, the U.S. Surgeon General asserted that geriatric mental health concerns have been “too often relegated to the rear of our national consciousness.”
  - Up to 20% of people 65 and older have a mental illness
  - Clinically significant symptoms in older patients:
    - Depression: up to 1/3
    - Anxiety: up to 40%
  - Psychological and social problems influence disease progression, medical adherence, functional status, morbidity and mortality in older patients

# Background

- The majority of older adults receive health care from primary care physicians.
- Co-location of mental health screening, assessment, and treatment in the primary care physician's office reduces stigma, improves access, and increases coordination of care between mental health and primary care teams.
- 2007 grant from the NYS Office of Mental Health
  - For integration of geriatric mental health care and primary care practice at the Wright Center (WC)
  - Standardized screening program for depression and anxiety, applied to all WC patients
  - Mental health team: geriatric psychiatrist, NP, social worker

# Mental Health Screen

## The PHQ-2 Patient Questionnaire

*Please circle the correct answer for each question.*

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. Little interest in doing things	0	1	2	3
2. Feeling down, depressed or hopeless	0	1	2	3

## The GAD-2 Patient Questionnaire

*Please circle the correct answer for each question.*

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

## Mental Health Summary Questionnaire

*Please circle the correct answer for each question.*

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. Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or of hurting yourself in some way	0	1	2	3

**Positive  
Screen**

**2 or 3**

**2 or 3**

**1, 2, or 3**

# Rationale and Objectives

- Little research on how patients feel about being screened for mental health problems by their primary care providers
- Study Objectives:
  - Evaluate patients' acceptance of and satisfaction with screening for depression and anxiety in a primary care setting
  - Examine potential associations between patient satisfaction and clinical, functional, and psychological status

# Methods

- July and August 2009: patients scheduled to be screened and asked to participate in study
  - Patient panels of 1-3 attending physicians per day
- Patient recruitment goals:
  - ≥ 100 patient participants
  - ≥ 10 patients per provider
- Physician asks patients to participate in interview after visit
  - Option for phone interview within 7 days
- Examining physician determines whether scheduled patients are eligible for screening and participation in study

# Methods

## Patient Eligibility:

- ≥ 65
- English speaking
- Screened by physician for depression and anxiety as part of usual care

## Exclusion by physician:

- Dementia/cognitive impairment
- Severe hearing impairment
- Patient recently screened or already in treatment for mental health problems
- Initial visits

# Patient Satisfaction Survey

- Adapted from existing survey instruments
- 16 multiple-choice questions
  - Mental health screening reactions
  - Self-assessment of overall health
  - Relationship with primary care physician
- 1 open-ended question
  - Patients invited to provide comments and feedback throughout interview and at the end
- Administered by interviewer (10-20 minutes)

# Methods

- Collect demographic and health status information from electronic patient charts for all eligible patients:
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Race/ethnicity
  - Functional status
  - Cognitive status
  - Results of depression and anxiety screen
  - Treatment disposition
  - Co-morbidities
  - Medications

# Results

Patients Scheduled	<b>150</b>	
Patients Eligible	<b>91</b>	
<b>Participants</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>76.9%</b>
Declined Survey	<b>8</b>	<b>8.8%</b>
Declined Mental Health Screen	<b>1</b>	<b>1.1%</b>
Not reached on phone within 7 days	<b>5</b>	<b>5.5%</b>
Not asked to participate	<b>7</b>	<b>7.7%</b>

# Patient Information (N = 70)

	Number	Percent
<b>Age</b>		
Mean	81	---
Range	65 - 101	---
65-74	11	15.7%
75-84	36	51.4%
85+	23	32.9%
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	54	77.1%

- Number of positive mental health screens: 27.1%
- Number of screens completed by proxy: 13.6%

# Results: Length of Screening

Length of screen =  
5-question written screen  
+  
any additional related  
questions asked by  
physician

<i>Just right</i>	<b>61</b>	<b>(87.1%)</b>
<i>Too short</i>	<b>8</b>	<b>(11.4%)</b>
<i>Too long</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>(1.4%)</b>

## Patient Comments:

### —*Too Short*

—*More questions needed, too brief*

—*Questions are not detailed and thorough enough*

# Results: Acceptability of Screening

<i>Very acceptable</i>	<b>47</b>	67.1%
<i>Acceptable</i>	<b>10</b>	14.3%
<i>Somewhat acceptable</i>	<b>7</b>	10.1%
<i>A little acceptable</i>	<b>4</b>	5.7%
<i>Not at all acceptable</i>	<b>1</b>	1.4%

## Patient Comments:

### — *Very acceptable or Acceptable*

— *Important; good; grateful to be asked*

— *I did not mind; It did not bother me.*

# Results: Acceptability of Screening

<i>Very acceptable</i>	<b>47</b>	67.1%
<i>Acceptable</i>	<b>10</b>	14.3%
<i>Somewhat acceptable</i>	<b>7</b>	10.1%
<i>A little acceptable</i>	<b>4</b>	5.7%
<i>Not at all acceptable</i>	<b>1</b>	1.4%

## Patient Comments

— ***Somewhat, A little, or Not at all***

— *Caught unaware; unexpected*

— *Would prefer the screen to be done with the physician*



# Results: Negative Reactions to Screening



*Did you find the depression and anxiety questions...*

	<b>Not at all</b>		<b>A little</b>		<b>Somewhat</b>		<b>Very</b>	
<b>Difficult?</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>84.3%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>

## Patient Comments

### — Difficulties

- *Difficulty fitting self into categories on written screen*
- *Not enough guidance provided in answering questions*
- *Disagreement with relative or caregiver*
- *Hard to describe emotions; contradictory feelings*



# Results: Negative Reactions to Screening



*Did you find the depression and anxiety questions...*

	<b>Not at all</b>		<b>A little</b>		<b>Somewhat</b>		<b>Very</b>	
<b>Stressful?</b>	<b>61</b>	87.1%	<b>4</b>	5.7%	<b>4</b>	5.7%	<b>1</b>	1.4%
<b>Intrusive or Too Personal?</b>	<b>66</b>	94.3%	<b>3</b>	4.3%	<b>0</b>	0%	<b>1</b>	1.4%

*Did you feel....*

	<b>Not at all</b>		<b>A little</b>		<b>Somewhat</b>		<b>Very</b>	
<b>Embarrassed?</b>	<b>67</b>	95.7%	<b>3</b>	4.3%	<b>0</b>	0%	<b>0</b>	0%
<b>Upset?</b>	<b>67</b>	95.7%	<b>0</b>	0%	<b>1</b>	1.4%	<b>2</b>	2.9%
<b>Uncomfortable?</b>	<b>62</b>	88.6%	<b>7</b>	10.0%	<b>1</b>	1.4%	<b>0</b>	0%

# Results: Patient-Physician Communication

*How easy or difficult was it to talk with your physician  
about depression and anxiety?*

<i>Very Easy</i>	<b>34</b>	48.6%
<i>Easy</i>	<b>13</b>	18.6%
<i>Neither easy nor difficult</i>	<b>1</b>	1.4%
<i>Difficult</i>	<b>1</b>	1.4%
<i>Very difficult</i>	<b>0</b>	0%
<i>I did not talk with my physician about depression and anxiety.</i>	<b>20</b>	28.6%

# Results: Patient-Physician Communication

## Patient Comments

- *It's a safe environment.*
- *I didn't feel like I was talking to a doctor; I felt like I was talking to a friend who was really concerned.*
- *I was glad that the doctor asks and doesn't say, "What do you expect at your age?" or push you into a psychiatrist's office.*

# Results: Frequency of Mental Health Screening

*How often should your doctor ask a few questions about depression and anxiety as part of the medical visit?*

“Every time I see the doctor”	<b>36</b>	51.4%
“On yearly check-ups”	<b>14</b>	20.0%
“Only when an emotional problem is suspected”	<b>17</b>	24.3%
“Not at all”	<b>1</b>	1.4%

*Every time I see the doctor*

- It should be part of a medical checkup, same as taking your blood pressure; symptoms might not be obvious.*
- Our physical health can be affected by our mental health.*
- It should be asked routinely, whether it’s necessary or not.*

# Results: Frequency of Mental Health Screening

*How often should your doctor ask a few questions about depression and anxiety as part of the medical visit?*

“Every time I see the doctor”	<b>36</b>	51.4%
“On yearly check-ups”	<b>14</b>	20.0%
“Only when an emotional problem is suspected”	<b>17</b>	24.3%
“Not at all”	<b>1</b>	1.4%

## Patient Comments

- Not necessary every time; every time is impractical*
- More concerned about physical health than mental health*

## Qualitative Results: Other Comments

- *There is an important connection between mental health and geriatrics.*
- *It's good to have [the screen] on paper because it makes you think about it more, in a formal way.*
- *Maybe I told [my physician] more than I would have otherwise because of the screen.*
- *They should give me ice cream before I fill it out.*

# Discussion

- The majority of patients interviewed find the mental health screening to be appropriate in length and an acceptable part of the medical visit.
- Few patients experienced negative emotional reactions to the screening.
- Most patients believe that their primary physicians should frequently ask them questions about mood and anxiety.

# Limitations

- Patient population
- Exclusion of other mental health problems

# Discussion: Next Steps

- Interview at least 100 patients
- Collect demographic and health status information from charts to examine potential associations between patient satisfaction and clinical, functional, and psychological status
- Categorize and quantify qualitative results
- Provider satisfaction survey
- Compare provider responses to patient feedback
- Work with the Wright Center's mental health team to discuss and interpret results of the survey

# Acknowledgements

- Mentors:
  - Ronald Adelman, MD
  - Risa Breckman, LCSW
- Eric Woods
- Attending physicians at the Wright Center
- Lull Berhane, Maria Galamaga, Mercedes Crespo, and WC staff
- Veronica LoFaso, MD
- Carol Capello, PhD
- Cary Reid, MD, PhD
- Ronald Goralewicz, NPP
- Amy Stern, LCSW
- Medical Student Training in Aging Research (MSTAR) Program