ATTENDANCE AT AN INTERPROFESSIONAL PEDIATRIC CHRONIC PAIN CLINIC REDUCES HEALTHCARE UTILIZATION: A RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS

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INTRODUCTION / AIM

Chronic pain in children is a common health concern that leads to high healthcare utilization. Children with chronic pain are often seen by multiple physicians and specialists, require multiple diagnostic tests, and frequent emergency room visits, resulting in high healthcare expenditures. The aim of this project was to evaluate whether attendance at an Ontario tertiary referral pediatric interprofessional chronic pain clinic reduces healthcare utilization measured based on claims submitted by physicians to Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) billings.

METHODS

Retrospective analyses of OHIP billings over eight years for 100 patients seen for their initial consultation in the Chronic Pain Clinic at the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto. OHIP billings were reviewed to extract healthcare utilization data relative to chronic pain metrics. This data included emergency room admittances, initial and follow-up physician appointments, and overall physician services. This data reflected the two years prior to first appointment, the year of first appointment, and the five subsequent years.

RESULTS

Examination of OHIP billings related to chronic pain metrics indicated that healthcare utilization increased during the two years prior to first appointment (2009) at the chronic pain clinic. Following initial appointment and ongoing care at the Chronic Pain Clinic, there was a decrease in the number of emergency room admittances, physician consultations and follow-up appointments, and overall physician services, which was sustained over the subsequent five years.

DISCUSSION / CONCLUSIONS

Attendance at the interprofessional chronic pain clinic at the Hospital for Sick Children reduced health care utilization related to the treatment, management, and care of patients with chronic pain, as indicated by a sustained reduction of OHIP billings for five years.

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