Expanding the Educational Value of Needs Assessments to Improve Obesity Health Care

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Synopsis
As part of a larger pilot study aimed to improve the relationship between overweight/obese patients and provider practices, this poster describes an innovative approach to needs assessments. The approach involves a multi-faceted, iterative design that leverages existing research, includes multiple informants, and accesses multiple modalities for data collection. The value-added of this approach is discussed in detail in the poster.

Purpose
An initiative is being piloted in South Carolina to improve the relationship between overweight/obese patients and provider practices.* As a portion of this initiative, this poster would describe an innovative approach to needs assessment which was formulated in response to the complexity of issues associated with addressing obesity. The poster would illuminate how assessments can add value beyond simply identifying target participant “needs,” which has been the objective of traditional needs assessments.

Methods
The study employed an initial two-stage (exploratory & needs) assessment approach that involved multiple methods (literature review, focus groups, interview/clinical mapping, surveys) and multiple informants (clinicians, clinical staff, and overweight/obese adults). This was followed by an iterative process that combines collective guided reflection with participants to refine the assessment and to engage learners in designing practice-based interventions.

Results
The following benefits have emerged from this innovative assessment approach:

- Study participants have a more comprehensive understanding of how their practice addresses weight-related issues
- The needs assessment stimulated awareness about current obesity health care practices, and interest for improving practice performance
- On-going learning and improvement have resulted from the iterative assessment process
- The use of multi-informants has fostered a shared understanding within the practice
- Inclusion of clinical staff increased practice-based buy-in

* The South Carolina Initiative for Quality Overweight/Obesity Care (SCIQOC) is a partnership between University of South Carolina School of Medicine- Palmetto Health Richland CME Organization and the Medical University of South Carolina Office of CME. The initiative is funded by Pfizer, Inc.
Conclusion

The value of needs assessments can be expanded by using a multi-faceted, iterative approach that leverages existing research, includes multiple informants, and accesses multiple modalities for data collection. Study limitations and next steps will be discussed.

Declaration

The pilot study discussed in the poster is funded by Pfizer, Inc.