Learning Contract

Field Site Description:

Center for Assessment of Pharmaceutical Practices (CAPP). The center is involved in consultation with the Veterans Administration, the Centers for Disease Control, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the pharmaceutical industry, and health care organizations (e.g. Blue Cross-Blue Shield). The center is dedicated to improving health care through research and consultation in the area of health outcomes assessment. The program's activities are based on an increased demand for new, patient-based assessment tools and methodologies for clinical management and in monitoring the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of patient care. Established in 1998, the program provides research, consulting, and executive-education services. The principal goals of the center is to advance the use of patient-centered assessments of health to improve health outcomes; to integrate patient-centered measures with extensive pharmaceutical and health services databases; and to advance research efforts in the areas of health outcomes, cost-effectiveness analysis, technology assessment, disease management, and pharmaceutical administration/health care policy.

Practicum Project:

The objective of this project is to utilize acquired classroom training and knowledge in practice. The main aim of this project is to acquire and implement knowledge on assessing and improving of the quality and outcome of care, particularly quality of epilepsy patients’ care. I will be focusing on the clinical aspects of epilepsy care quality in elderly, women and patients resistant to AED therapy, as well as assisting in development of abstraction tool based on the quality indicators established by the expert panel comprising of epileptologists, general neurologists and other clinicians and researchers. These indicators would be then measured by reviewing the charts of patients from Boston Medical Center, and gaps between the current standards of care and clinical practice will be then studied by collecting data from PCP, Neurology and Epilepsy care patients.

I will work with Dr. Lewis Kazis and other team members to develop the abstraction tool. I will also be actively involved in piloting of this tool to understand inter-rater differences and the gaps and shortcomings of the instrument, and then refining the tool further. This tool can also be used for any further studies which will be done for quality improvement in other settings of Epilepsy care.

I will also be involved in recruiting patients for focus group. Patient focus groups are held to develop quality indicators which are patient centered. They would be based on what patients think is optimum care for them. These would then be included in the final guidelines for quality care of epilepsy patients. These focus groups will also help us to understand the gaps in the care.

I will also do phone interview with patients, to administer questionnaire to validate the data collected by the chart abstraction process, as well as collect additional patient-based data about their health status, quality of Epilepsy care and quality of life. I would also be involved in training newly recruited research assistants, for conducting telephone interviews with patients.
Learning Goal:

The main aim of the practicum is to understand the methods and processes of measuring and improving quality of outpatient care, particularly epilepsy care.

Specific Learning Objectives:

- I will do literature review to understand what quality healthcare is; implement acquired knowledge into practice while developing the abstraction tool and conducting medical chart reviews; and to understand to assess accuracy of epilepsy identification.
- I will practice data collection and management skills, techniques for confidential data storage, and basics of data analyses. Team has experts who have prior experience in working with confidential data. I will learn from them and put in practice while doing chart abstraction and telephonic interview.
- I will concentrate on methods for effective administration of questionnaires to patients
- I will concentrate on improving research presentation and writing skills. I will meet with the working group twice weekly and they would give me regular feedback on my writing skills. The working group comprise of professionals in different fields like clinicians, researchers, public health specialist. There will be cross-training and cross-teaching throughout the project.
- Establish a network of contacts in internal medicine, epilepsy specialty, epidemiology and public health research.
- Define current issues in epilepsy care in order to envision future innovative approaches to improve clinical care.
- I will contribute in development of a medical chart review tool which will be used to measure the quality of care in epilepsy patients; I will participate in piloting the Instrument to minimize bias and inter-rater reliability. The questions would be framed in a way that the abstractors don’t have to take any individual decision while capturing the data from charts
- Improve interpersonal skills through interactions with key players of the team and the Principal Investigator.
- Understand various methodologies which can quantify the care in epilepsy patients

Measures to Accomplish Learning Objectives and Goals

- Review the grant in detail to understand the study objectives.
- Review the tool developed for other studies to understand the complexities of developing a chart abstraction tool
- Meet with the group consisting of principal investigator, physicians, research assistants to discuss the various aspects of the tool development process and incorporate the inputs from the team
- Training for chart abstraction – Logician training and SCM
- I shall set up a call center for phone calls. Ruzan Avetisyan, my field supervisor would help me to get logistics organized (computers, compute tables, phones and headsets). I will also get regular guidance from her to meet challenges faced during the process of managing the call center and coordinating different tasks.
Deliverables:
The goal of the study is to develop a chart abstraction tool which can validly measure the quality of Epilepsy care, based on the indicators developed by an Epilepsy expert panel as criteria for quality of care in epilepsy patients’ care. Develop a chart which can quantify these clinical indicators and can be easily assessed by the abstractors. This form will be developed in a way that it can be used for any further studies which will be carried out in other clinical settings where quality of Epilepsy care needs to be measured.

Time line:

August:-

- Familiarization to the CAPP objectives and its work.
- Understand the various aspects involved in the study and link them together
- Meet with Dr. Lewis Kazis to understand the key deliverables and my progress on the project. I shall also discuss about any additional logistic support needed to accomplish the study. Dr. Lewis would help me to understand and learn different research methodologies. He will introduce me to the experts involved in the study so I can talk and meet with them for their input on the various stages of the study.
- I will meet with biostatistician and epidemiologist involved in the study to help me learn data collection and analysis methods related to epilepsy study.
- Review materials related to epilepsy and treatment of epilepsy including AED’s and follow-up care.
- Literature reviews to understand any other research work done in the field of epilepsy care. I will meet with experts from BMC, BUSPH to study other researches in the similar field. My other project which is also on epilepsy would help me meet with people from different hospitals who have prior experience like Framingham Medical Center Researchers and RA’s, epidemiologist, clinicians and statistician.
- Regularly meet with the working group to develop abstraction tool data elements.
- Regular updates of the abstraction tool development to steering group of the project consisting of the Principal Investigator, epidemiologist, statistician, clinicians and epileptologist.
- Logician and SCM training for chart abstractions.
- Recruit epilepsy patients from Epilepsy/ Neurology clinic for focus group session, and maintain database of the recruited patients.
- Record minutes of the meeting and make changes to the chart abstraction tool based on discussions.

September:

- Review of cohort of epilepsy patients medical charts in logician
- Identify parts of medical chart in logician where each data element can be found
- Finalize the chart abstraction tool and develop codes/ linkages with the quality indicators, to aid in analyzing the data
- Meet with the team to discuss the codes and the tool to begin the piloting
- Begin piloting of the tool and review gaps in the abstraction process and feasibility of the tool
Prepare notes based on the gaps identified during the chart abstraction done by various members of the team and assess the reliability of the tool.

Make appropriate changes to the abstraction tool to make it adaptable to the users and logicians.

Coordinate and facilitate the focus group session of Spanish speaking patients and aid in finalizing the patient-centered quality indicators.

October

- Train for and initiate research tasks, including subject recruitment, survey administration, and telephonic interview.
- Training for electronic chart abstraction tool to familiarize how to enter data.
- Develop chart abstraction protocols before beginning the abstraction.
- Closely monitor the telephonic interview and mail-out questionnaires and their coordination. Maintain the database of the patients who have been interviewed, as questionnaires should be mailed out and chart abstraction can start for these patients.
- Begin chart abstractions and maintain a data base for all the unaccepted findings and developments in the abstraction process.
- Meet with the Steering group once a week to discuss the developments of study and discuss any challenges faced during the abstraction process.
- Meet with Dr. Lewis Kazis for a mid-point review of the project.
- Inter-rater and intra-rater reliability testing among the chart abstractors.
- Maintain a database for continuous improvement of the abstraction tool and abstraction process.

November

- Continue the abstraction process.
- Continue updating chart abstraction tool and the process, based on the identified gaps and shortcomings.
- Regular meetings with the working group and steering group.
- Coordinate and conduct telephone interviews with Epilepsy patients.
- Help to mail patient questionnaire in timely manner, after telephone interviews.
- Final report to Dr. Lewis Kazis about the progress in the work and the accomplished tasks.