Growing Up Healthy: A Study on Young Adults and their Readiness to Transition to Independent Healthcare

Are college students ready to transition to independent healthcare?

College Students & Readiness for Healthcare Transitioning

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INTRODUCTION

- The transition to adulthood is difficult for many, especially young adults with chronic conditions. Demars et al. (2011) reported that approximately 10 million children between 0 and 17 years in the United States have special healthcare needs.
- Transition readiness is derived from the concept of health care transitioning (HCT), which is defined as “the process of shifting from pediatric to adult-focused care” (Kelemen et al., 2014, p. 1062).
- For college students, approximately two-thirds of a surveyed population (209 participants) had not discussed transitioning to an adult provider or changing insurance needs (D’Angelo et al,. 2016)
- The local communities can be affected by this health problem as the growing population does not utilize the proper avenues of the health care system, possibly leading to misuse of the emergency room, decreased doctor’s visits, and a lack of participation in healthy initiatives within the area.

RESULTS

- When asked if they call the doctor’s office to make an appointment, 56% of participants responded I always do this (n=51), 4.4% of participants responded with no, but I want to learn (n=4)., and 3.3% of participants said no (n=3).
- When asked if they knew what their insurance covers, 11% of participants responded with I always do this (n=10), 31.2% of participants said no, but I want to learn (n=29), 2.2% of participants said no, I don’t know how (n=2), and 26.4% of participants said no (n=24).
- When asked if they fill out the medical history form, 68.1% of participants responded with I always do this (n=62), 3.3% of participants said no, but I want to learn (n=3), 1.1% responded no, I don’t know how (n=1), and 3.3% responded with no (n=3).

DISCUSSION

- College programs can utilize healthcare transitioning tools to adequately address these disparities through education, improved patient and provider relationships, and awareness.
- Independent healthcare is a topic that covers multiple areas, such as health literacy, socioeconomic status, social determinants of health, and chronic disease management.
- Healthcare transitioning is a process that requires collaborative effort between parents, the student, and medical providers.

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