

## Abstract

**Objective:** To evaluate if provider education and resources can improve depression screening adherence performed by the medical providers to all patients with type 2 diabetes completing an outpatient appointment at a mid-Atlantic outpatient diabetes clinic.

**Methods:** All providers at a mid-Atlantic outpatient diabetes clinic were provided education and resources that were focused on how to utilize the PHQ-2 and PHQ-9 within the medical charting. Provider concerns were identified and addressed in relation to why they were not screening for depression. An electronic smartphrase was created for providers to use in after visit summaries that contained outpatient mental health resources for patients to follow-up with regarding their mental health care.

**Results:** When comparing depression screening for all patients diagnosed with type 2 diabetes between August 2021, the first month of the study, and February 2022, the last month of the implementation period, it was determined that there was a significant difference between the providers screening percentages as  $p=0.028$  which is  $<0.05$ . Providers reported feeling more comfortable with depression screening when there were subsequent resources provided for the patient to access further mental health care.

**Conclusion:** Provider education focused on how to utilize the PHQ-2 and PHQ-9 within the electronic charting system should be implemented to improve depression screening for at risk patient populations such as those with type 2 diabetes. This type of education is feasible to implement in the outpatient setting as long as support resources are available. Finally, providing outpatient mental health resources allows the providers to give some sort of follow-up within the local community. Provider education on depression screening can allow for chronically ill

populations to be identified and treated for depression. This is important as these populations suffer from depression at much higher rates than the general public.

*Key Words:* depression screening, type 2 diabetes, PHQ-2, PHQ-9, mental health, resources, education, outpatient, smartphrase,