

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this quality improvement project is to implement the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) screening tool within the emergency department to better identify patients at risk for major depression and suicide, and thereby align them with mental health, psychiatry, and social work resources.

Problem Statement

Depression is identifiable and manageable disease. Patients with major depression have higher hospitalizations, ICU admissions and readmission (health expenditures to exceed \$90 billion). Prevalence is significantly greater among patients in the ED. Patients present to the ED with somatic complaints and medical complications arising from unmanaged depression. Patients are stabilized during their hospital admission, then discharged without assessing and addressing the underlying cause which prevents them from managing their health

Project Goals

Structure

PHQ-9 will be integrated into the EHR, and 100% of nursing staff will receive depression education
Nursing will demonstrate ability to document PHQ-9 in EHR, and identify positive screens

Process

100% of patients meeting inclusion criteria will be screened using PHQ-9

Outcome Goal

100% of patients with positive screen will receive resources in discharge paperwork, or mental health consult

Methods

- PHQ-9 was selected as screening tool
- Patients who met inclusion criteria were screened and results were documented in the electronic health record.
- Once a patient screens positive (score of "10"), provider was notified
- Depression resources placed in discharge summary and initiated mental health consult if indicated based on patient's presentation or score for severe depression.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Emergency Severity Index score of 2-5
- Patients in treatment area and discharged from hospital
- Patients agreeable to performing screen

Exclusion Criteria:

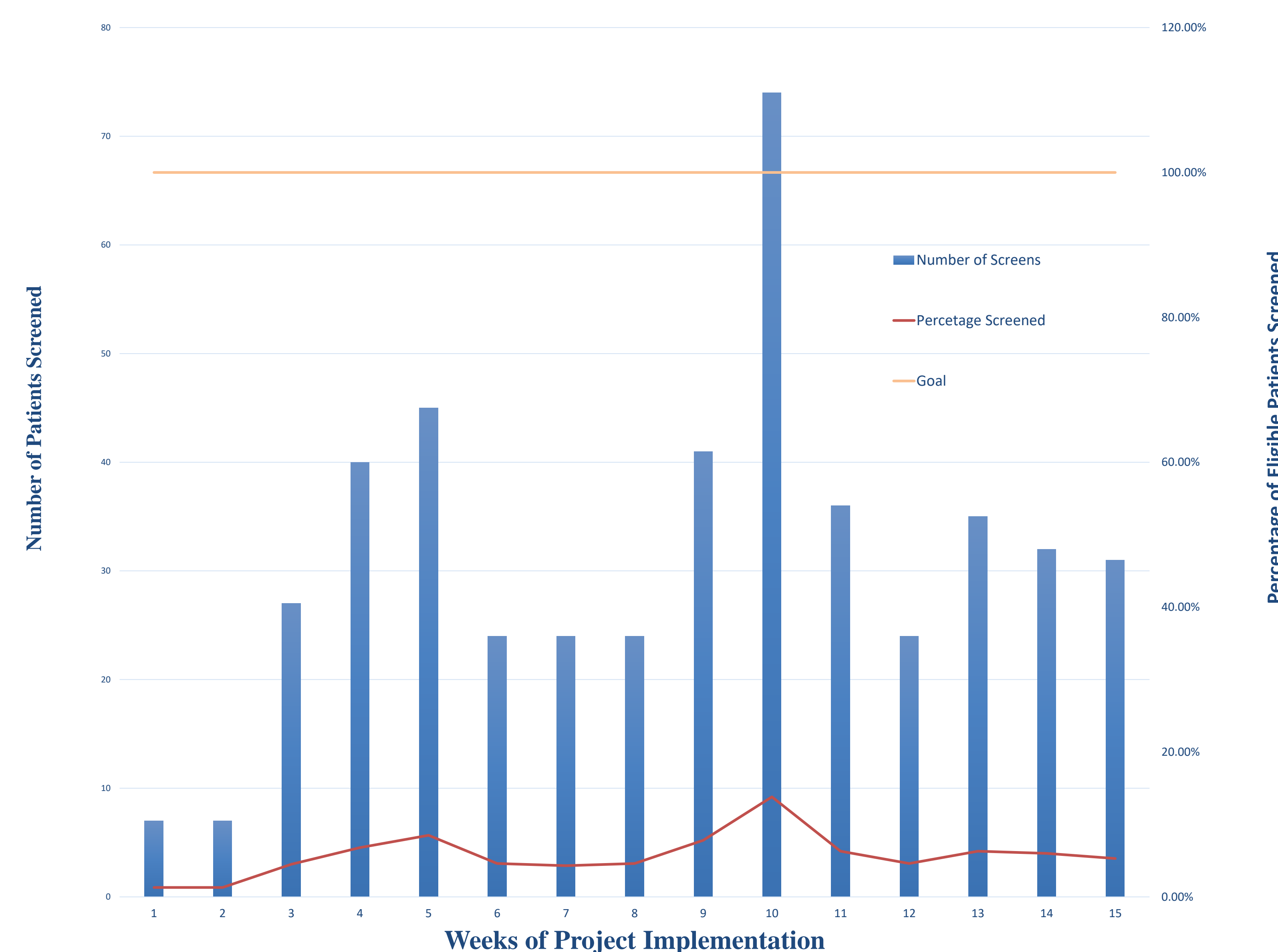
- Patients Emergency Severity Index score of 1
- Patients with unstable mental or medical conditions
- Patient who refuse screening



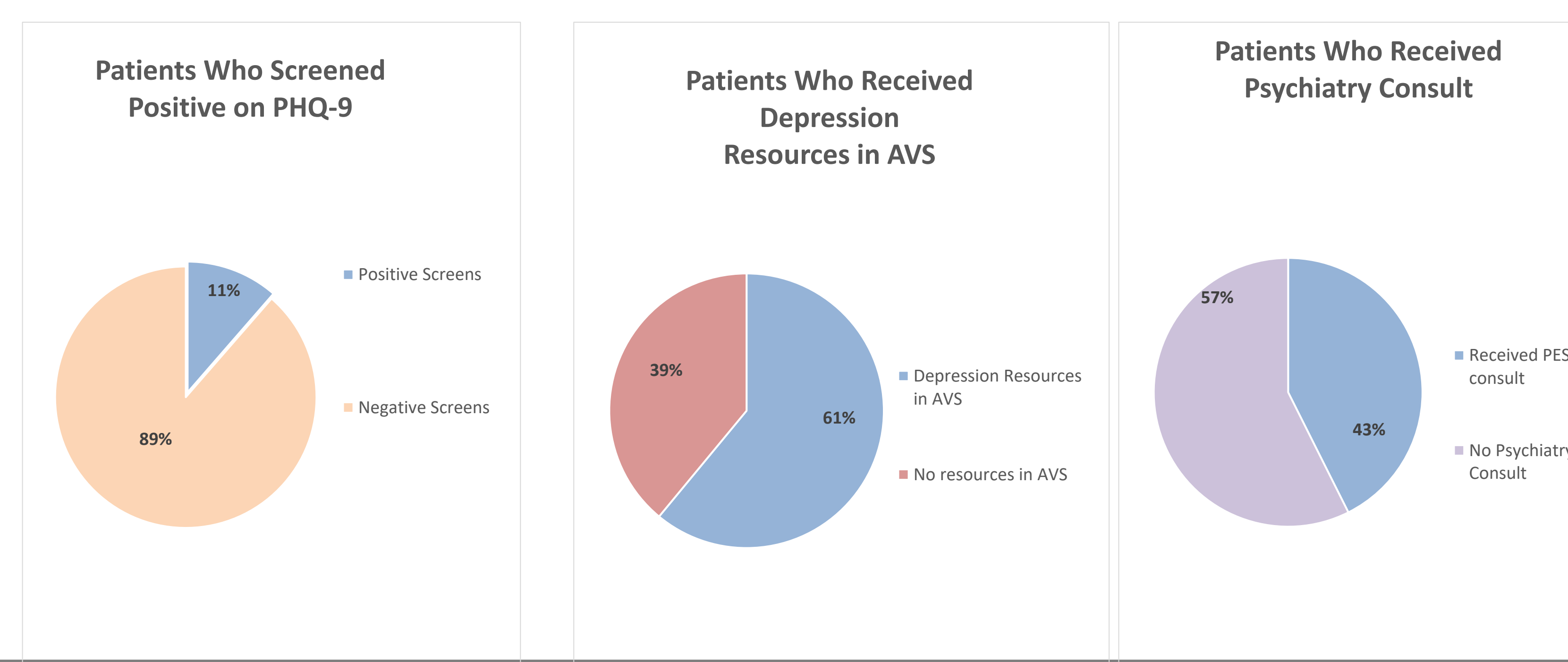
Results

- 8,229 patients in the ED met criteria for screening
- Total of 474 screenings were performed on eligible patients
- 54 patients screened positive, making up 11.4% of screens
- 33 patients received depression resources in discharge paperwork, comprising of 61.1% of positive screens
- 23 patients received psych consultation
- Majority of screens were performed on low acuity patients (ESI 4 and 5)

Utilization of PHQ-9 in the Emergency Department



Results



Discussion

- There was increasing utilization of the screening tool with 74 screens performed in week 10
- 100% goals were not met, however increased evaluation of depression compared to baseline, of no depression screening
- Peaks of utilization correlates with incentives (food & snacks) provided to staff
- Some patients who scored positive did not have history of depression
- Project encouraged staff to also explore their own depression and mental health

Limitations

- Resistance from nursing and medicine teams to perform screenings
- Nursing/staff shortage and turnover, lack of consistency
- Initiative fatigue, multiple projects occurring in ED
- Leadership turnover, loss of stakeholder buy in
- Transfer of patients before screening, eligible patients are transferred out of ED before screening can take place

Conclusions

- The historical nature of discriminatory practices have had a profound influence on the health of patients presenting to the ED
- PHQ-9 had 5.8% utilization rate, with majority of patients screening positive receiving mental health resources
- Resources were available to address mental health sequelae including social work, psychiatry, ED providers/nursing staff, and substance abuse counseling
- Significant systemic and staffing challenges limited utilization of the PHQ-9 in the ED

References



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