

Evaluation of Durable Medical Equipment Acquisition in a Family Medicine Residency Clinic

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Background & Purpose

- Durable Medical Equipment (DME) is a collection of medical devices used to prevent injury, improve function or pain, or aid healing after injury or surgery. These devices are commonly prescribed to patients in the primary care setting.
- Barriers clinicians face when prescribing DME include:
 - Unsure where to obtain items
 - Unsure how to properly order items
 - Delay in obtaining items
- Our system's Electronic Medical Record, *Epic*, allows users to share instructive or informational texts called "*SmartPhrases*" with other users
- Our objective was to evaluate the current avenues clinicians use to obtain DME, such as via physical therapy departments and retailers in Milwaukee, WI and to evaluate the incorporation of a new instructive *Epic SmartPhrase* and its impact on DME prescription in clinical practices.

Methods

- Novel *Epic SmartPhrase*, outlining recommendations on ordering DME, was available to providers at four Milwaukee clinics Feb-Jun 2021
- Surveys were administered before and after implementation of the *SmartPhrase*. Survey asked questions regarding:
 - Clinician's confidence levels regarding DME prescription
 - Whether the *SmartPhrase* changed or benefited their clinical practice
- Paired *t*-tests were used to compare confidence level before and after intervention of *Epic SmartPhrase*.

Results

- Sample size: Pre-survey (N=26); Post-survey (N=17); Paired responses (N=11).
- No statistically significant change in clinician's confidence level when prescribing DME ($p= 0.441$) (*Figure 1*).
- The distribution of clinician's confidence level approached normal and was similar before and after intervention.
- We saw some perceived benefit of the *SmartPhrase* on clinical practice, however many clinicians did not have a chance to utilize the *SmartPhrase* or were not aware of it (*Figure 2*).

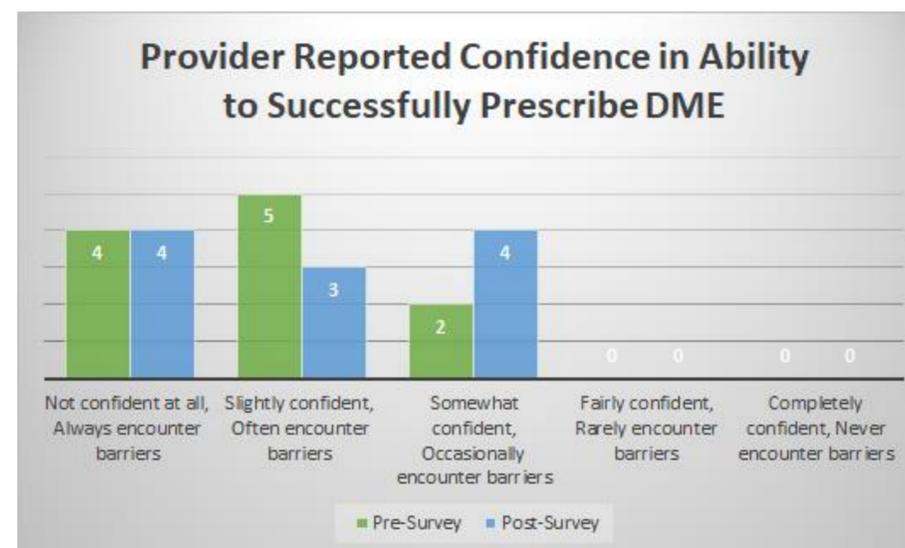


Figure 1. Provider Reported Confidence in Ability to Successfully Prescribe DME. Numbers in the bar graph indicate number of responses per category.

Acknowledgements

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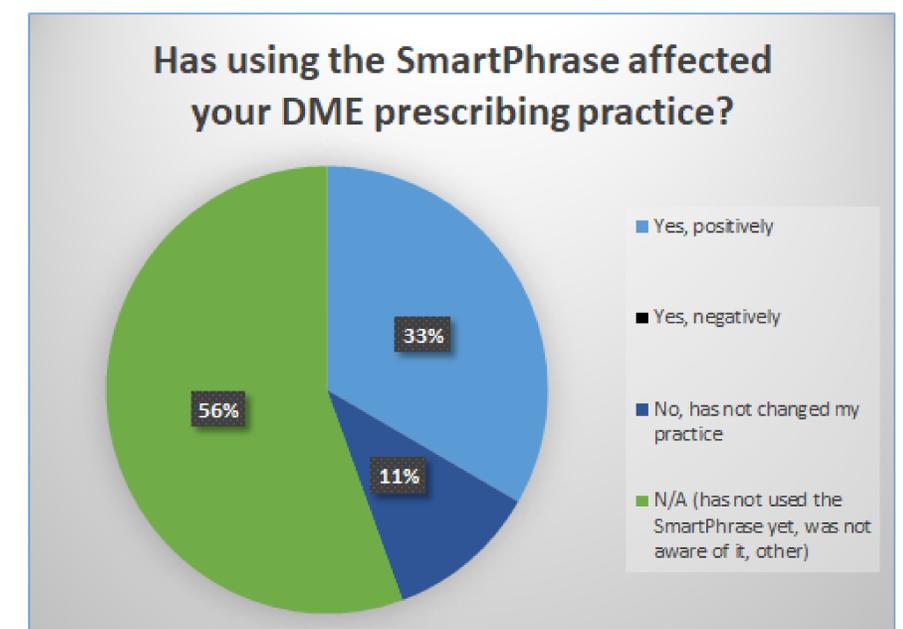


Figure 2. Respondents reported how the Epic SmartPhrase affected their clinical practice. Majority noted they had not used it for various reasons.

Conclusion

- While data did not support statistically significant change in confidence level, data may be limited by small sample size.
- Improving DME prescribing practices is likely still clinically relevant. Many providers reported via survey or anecdotally that the *SmartPhrase* helped them more efficiently prescribe DME for patients, including several devices obtained same day of visit.

Future Directions

- Expand to more primary care clinics, larger sample size.
- Re-emphasize availability of *SmartPhrase*, as many providers were not aware of it or did not use it prior to post-survey analysis.

References

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