How Capable Are We at Assessing Patients’ Capacity? A Retrospective Review of Institutional Experience

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PURPOSE / OBJECTIVES

- Assessing patient capacity balances autonomy and patient protection [1].
- Aid to Capacity Evaluation (ACE) is a widely used tool for this purpose [2].
- Shortcomings in physician and provider skills compromise patient care.
- Our study evaluates ACE documentation quality in community settings.

MATERIAL & METHODS

- Retrospective review of patients at UPMC Harrisburg Hospital from April 1, 2022, to June 30, 2022.
- Introduced a scoring system (0-8 points) to assess documentation quality.
- Two physicians independently assessed documentation, with a third expert for discrepancies.
- Descriptive statistics presented categorical variables as percentages.
- Comparison between groups using Fisher’s exact test or chi-square test.

RESULTS

Our study found that only 36.48% of capacity assessments using the ACE tool were appropriate, with most errors by internal medicine specialists. This highlights the need for better education and re-evaluation of documentation practices, despite available tools.

REFERENCES


SUMMARY / CONCLUSION

- ACE documentation quality is suboptimal.
- Internal medicine specialists contributed to most errors (90%).
- Specialized physicians had error-free ACE documentation.
- A persistent documentation gap exists despite user-friendly tools such as ACE [3].
- Future steps involve education and re-evaluation of providers to address this issue.