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A Formative Evaluation of an Adaptation that Incorporates Health Equity into the Evidence-Based Quality Improvement Implementation Strategy

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VA HSR CyberSeminar

Focus on Health Equity and Action

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VHA Health Equity –
Quality Enhancement Research Initiative
National Partnered Evaluation Center

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs
VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System





Disclosures

All authors have no conflicts of interest to report

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Outline

- Background: Health Equity & Implementation Science
- Pilot Overview: EBQI Equity-focused adaptation
- Pilot Evaluation
- Conclusions & Next Steps



Poll #1

What is your primary role in a healthcare setting?

- Research or Implementation science
- Clinical care
- Administrator
- Veteran patient
- Other ... I'm just really interested in this topic



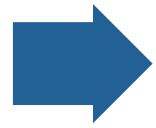
Poll #2

What is your experience with experience with implementation science?

- I'm a newbie
- I have some experience
- I am a seasoned expert



Outline



Background:

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Background: Implementation Science

Implementation Science
Definition:

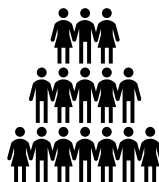
“the scientific study of methods to promote the systematic uptake of research findings and other evidence-based practice into routine practice.”

i.e., how do we get research on what works to patients

Research timeline... average: 17 years



Basic science



Clinical trials



Health Services
Research



How to
shorten this?



Routine clinical
practice





Background: Implementation Science

Interventions

WHAT we are trying to implement:

- Evidence-Based Practices
- New innovations

Implementation
strategy

HOW we get people (e.g., clinical staff) to use the intervention

“methods or techniques used to enhance adoption, implementation, and sustainability of a clinical program or practice”



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Background: Health Equity

Implementation science can exacerbate inequities if there are differences in

- Access to evidence-based practices (EBPs) and innovations
- Benefits from EBPs and innovations

THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS




In Large Texas Cities, Access To Coronavirus Testing May Depend On Where You Live

MAY 27, 2020 · 5:00 AM ET

HEARD ON MORNING EDITION

By Sean McMinn, Audrey Carlsen, Bret Jaspers, Ruth Talbot, Stephanie Adeline

 5-Minute Listen



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs
VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System



Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) Program



Background: Health Equity



Equity is an important consideration for implementation science ...yet largely overlooked

- Intervention – tailor interventions to different settings and patient populations e.g., in-person to virtual modality
- Implementation strategy – embed equity considerations into implementation strategies



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Setting: RIVET Initiative

RIVET Goal: Implement evidenced-based practices (EBPs) to manage patients at high risk for hospitalization (“high-risk patients”) in primary care setting



- Interventions: 2 EBPs to screen for modifiable-risk factors to reduce hospitalization and emergency care use
- Implementation strategy: Evidence-Based Quality Improvement (EBQI)

Incorporate equity into RIVET’s implementation strategy



RIVET Ideal for Equity Considerations

High-risk patients

- High-risk patients include subgroups disproportionately experience disparities e.g., Black, older, low income, rural
- RIVET EBPs: address common challenges for underserved groups, e.g., social needs, care-coordination



Medication Adherence
Assessment



Comprehensive Assessment &
Care Planning

Equity priority: Ensure these subgroups of high-risk patients can access EBPs

EBQI

- Engagement of both leadership and front-line staff
- QI facilitation for clinical champions (front-line primary care staff): QI training
 - QI skills for future projects
- 18 months of practice facilitation

Parallels between QI and Health Equity:
Incremental & data driven processes
for change



Objective

- 1 Developed and piloted health equity adaptation to the Evidence-Based Quality Improvement (EBQI) implementation strategy
- 2 Formative evaluation on acceptability of this EBQI equity adaptation



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EBQI Health Equity Adaptation

1-hour health equity didactics
delivered as part of monthly QI
trainings for clinical champions

**QI coaching support for health
equity activities** as part of
practice facilitation





QI Didactic Topics for Clinical Champions

Topics and Skills Covered during our Sessions

-  Identify the problem and the transformational goal
-  Define SMART goals to address the problem
-  Process mapping: current and future states
-  PDSA cycles
-  Data collection plan & use: inform PDSA cycles
-  Spread
-  Sustainment
-  Health Equity & QI

Standard Quality Improvement topics

Added a session about health equity and QI



Equity Didactics Topics



HEALTH EQUITY IS
IMPORTANT IN QI



HEALTH EQUITY
IMPORTANT FOR
HIGH-RISK
PATIENTS



HEALTH EQUITY QI
ACTIVITIES THAT
ARE ACTIONABLE





Actionable & Practical Activities

Potential ways to incorporate health equity into QI



SMART goal

Include 1 equity-related SMART goals

Examples:

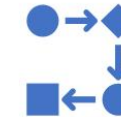
- Increase EBP reach to a specific subgroup
- Decrease disparity in EBP reach between subgroups



Data collection plan

Stratify outcomes by subgroups

Include 1 or 2 equity-related outcomes in data collection



Process map

Consider how current and future states may affect equity

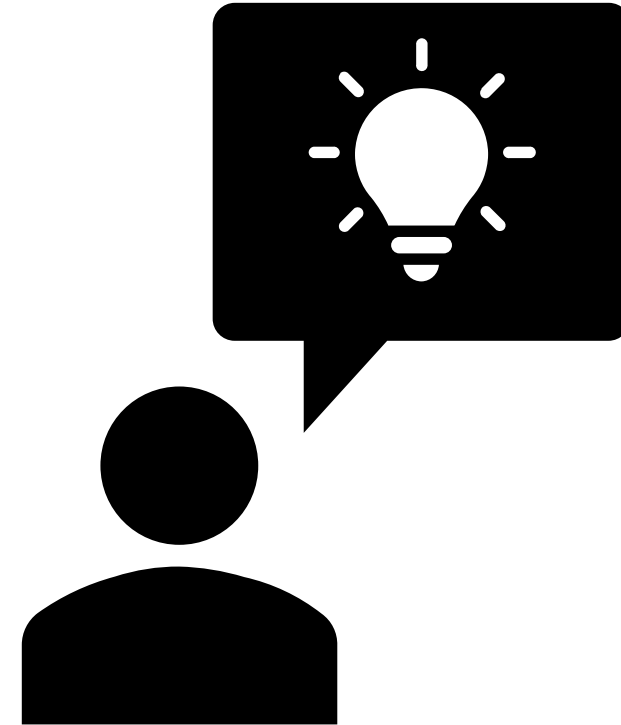
- Population
- Identification and outreach
- Adaptations





QI Coaching Support

- Interactive discussion about equity priorities and concerns
- “Homework” – Develop health equity implementation plan
- Encouraged sites to incorporate health equity in later PDSA cycle
- Trouble shoot with clinical champions on ways to improve equity





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- ➔ **Pilot Evaluation**
 - **Methods**
 - Results
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Evaluation Methods



Clinical champion surveys

Acceptability of health equity didactics



Semi-structured interviews with clinical champions

Topics: feedback, suggestions for improvement, future plans

Rapid qualitative analysis



Facilitator Reflections

Semi-structured interviews with facilitators planned



Outline

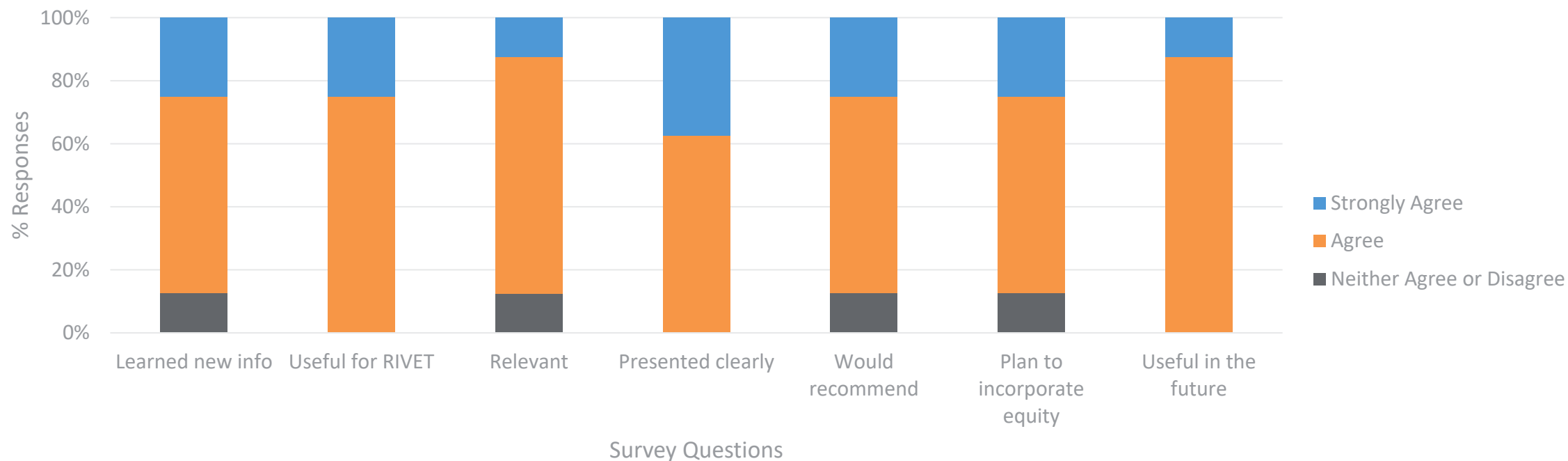
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Acceptability of Didactic Session


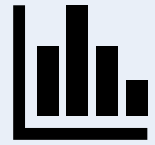
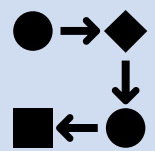
- All 6 eligible teams received EBQI equity adaptation

Survey results: Acceptability of didactic session (n=8)





Variety of Health Equity Activities

		Examples from clinical champion teams
SMART goals		Focused PDSA cycle on health equity e.g., focus on women Veterans; high-risk patients living in high-poverty neighborhoods
Data collection plan		Collected patient demographic data e.g., age, food and housing insecurity
Examine process map		Multiple modalities for EBP administration e.g., in-person, telehealth; proactively identify high-risk patients from Primary Care Equity Dashboard



Challenges Beyond Individual Teams' Control

- Limited engagement from underserved populations
- Access issues in rural areas
- Resource constraints: understaffed primary care teams, insufficient protected time





Benefits & Opportunities for Improvement

Benefits:

- Diverse perspectives of RIVET team
- Encouraged to see how patients benefit

Areas for improvement:

- Consider appropriate timing of the session
- Understanding of local context and unique equity issues

“[Facilitators] need to **think a little bit broader** when trying to determine the equity related goals because **every clinic is going to have a different nuance** to it....There's a clinic that's on the side of town that is more affluent, and they may not have the same issues that I have here.”





Potential Changes in Patient Care & Future QI Activities

- Changed how primary care teams provided care
- New perspectives on understanding patients: more open & different ways of thinking

“My team was pleasantly surprised by things that we would not have picked up...it allowed us to look at a Veteran in a different way, through **a different prism if you will.**”





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Conclusion

- EBQI health equity adaptation was well-received by primary care clinical champions
- Practical and potentially scalable approach to incorporate equity into EBQI...and even some other implementation strategies



Next Steps

Looking to the Future

- Improve EBQI equity adaptation v2.0
- Incorporate equity into other EBQI projects
- Equity as a core component of EBQI
- Equity adaptations to other implementation strategies





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Questions?

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