The Role of the Nurse and Advanced Practice Provider in Multidisciplinary Team Management of Patients with Short Bowel Syndrome: Results of a National Survey

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INTRODUCTION

Short bowel syndrome (SBS) is a serious and chronic malabsorptive disorder that results from physical loss and functional deficiency of portions of the intestine, primarily due to surgical resection [1, 2]. While there are no established national standards, studies have shown SBS multidisciplinary teams (MDTS) to lead to lower morbidity/mortality and a higher likelihood of weaning from parenteral nutrition [3, 4]. This study sought to understand practice patterns and attitudes of clinicians managing patients with SBS to identify how nurses and advanced practice providers work in MDTS and to determine future educational needs.

METHODLOGY

Using convenience samples, nonprobability, focus groups, and the input of an SBS expert, a survey instrument was developed to understand current practice patterns and attitudes related to SBS. The surveys were field tested with SBS HCPs experienced in managing SBS.

The web-based survey was randomly distributed to US-practicing gastroenterologists (GIs), pediatric gastroenterologists (GI NPs), physician assistants (PAs), GI nurses (RNs), and registered dietitians (Dietitians) in December 2019 and January 2020.

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

A total of 558 surveys (n = 558) were completed for analysis. The respondents were 53% practitioners (NPs), physician assistants (PAs), GI nurses (RNs), and registered dietitians (Dietitians), 36% gastroenterologists (GIs), pediatricians (Peds), surgeons, GI nurse practitioners (NPs), and other advanced practice providers. The nurse practitioner (NP) group included nurses (RNs) and physician assistants (PAs).

Other/Unsure

Managed in past

Never managed SBS

Managed in past

More than half of respondents were nurses, NPs, and PAs. Less than half of respondents were surgeons, gastroenterologists, pediatricians, and other/unsure.

CONCLUSIONS

In a national survey, less than half of HCPs reported that their SBS patients were managed in formal MDTS and clinicians making up these teams vary widely across organizations.

Clinicians generally view their colleagues and peers as useful sources of information, so nurses and advanced practice providers can specifically help within MDT to address key barriers: Prevention of complications, attention to therapeutic adherence, and patient education.

The current study identified future SBS educational needs in order to incorporate nurses and advanced practice providers into high performing MDTS.

REFERENCES


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Nurses and advanced practice providers are well-suited to address many barriers to SBS management

Nurses and advanced practice providers are well-suited to address many barriers to SBS management. Please indicate the significance of each of the following barriers to the optimal management of patients with SBS.

Many of the most important topics to include in future education necessitate an MDT approach

In considering participating in continuing education on the topic of short bowel syndrome, what topics would be most helpful for future CE/CME programs to address (please list, N = 558)

Current treatment options/guidelines/algorithm

TPN/nutrition

New treatment options/critical trials

Complications of SBS (infection, etc.)

Diagnostic

Dietary recommendations

Intestinal/bowel transplant

How useful do you find the following sources of information for staying up-to-date on the topic of SBS?

Colleagues and peers

Clinical practice guidelines

Peer-reviewed journal articles

CE/CME accredited activities

General medical/surgical journals

Healthcare, (UpToDate)

Pharmaceutical company websites and materials

RNs rated these items higher than overall clinician average

NPs/PAs rated these items higher than overall clinician average

Use of formal multidisciplinary teams in the management of patients with SBS is not universal

Does your institution utilize a multidisciplinary team to make treatment decisions for patients with short bowel syndrome?

Which clinicians are typically involved in the management of your patients with SBS?