Education as an Intervention for Prevention of Non-Urgent ED Visits

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United States Emergency Departments (ED) collectively experience 130 million visits each year. Healthcare spending has reached an all-time high. Overutilization of the ED for non-urgent medical concerns has been targeted as a potential area of study and intervention for potential healthcare savings. Poor health literacy has been identified as one of the leading causes of non-urgent ED visits. This quality improvement project was conducted in a 14-bed ED in a small, urban hospital. Study participants were identified and systematically placed into two groups. The intervention group received an educational intervention that targeted low-cost clinics within the area and general information about primary care providers. The intervention was evaluated through structured patient survey. The typical patient who presented to the ED for a non-urgent medical concern was non-Hispanic, black female who was employed and had completed some college. Patients who received the educational intervention had an increased awareness of low-cost clinics.