PROJECT MEMBERS:
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2- **Lisa Kanigsberg:** *Co-Investigator*

Evaluating Project ECHO Autism's Effectiveness: A content analysis of community physicians' responses on the uptake of recommendations

BACKGROUND

- Health care problems affect quality of care for ASD. Block (2013) shows how poor health and inequality go hand in hand. The image below was found in a report by Wellesley Institute (Abban, 2013)

Rising Inequality Declining Health

Project ECHO: Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes

The ECHO® Model

Amplification – Use **Technology** to leverage scarce resources

Share **Best Practices** to reduce disparity

Case Based Learning to master complexity

Web-based **Database** to **Monitor Outcomes**

A
B
C
D

https://www.aucd.org/meetings/302/28320/AUCD-LEND-ECHO_11.18.19.pdf

Benefits

- Better access for rural and underserved patients
- Reduced disparities
- Better quality and safety
- Rapid dissemination of best practices
- Reduced variations in care
- Greater efficiency
- Reduced wait times

- The ECHO Ontario Autism program helps reduce healthcare disparities and reduce wait times. This program aims to aid community physicians in their ability to work with autistic youth. The ECHO program aims to scaffold physicians to be well equipped to deal with such cases as physicians are often perfectly placed to meet care needs.
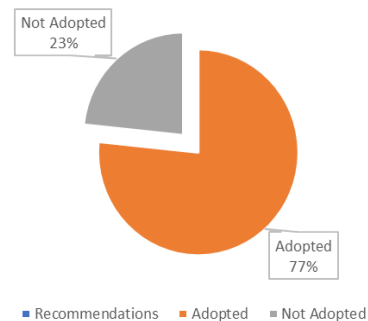
OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study was to evaluate the efficacy of the ECHO Ontario Autism program by analyzing 3 aspects:

1- Which general recommendations were the most useful?
2- Which recommendations were not implemented and why?
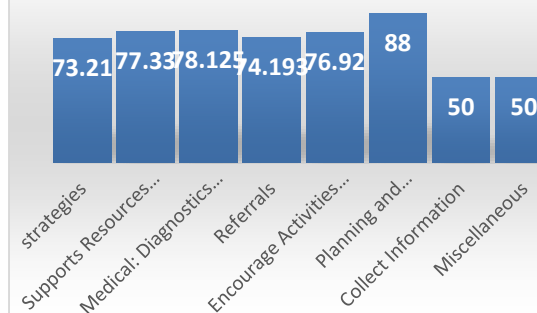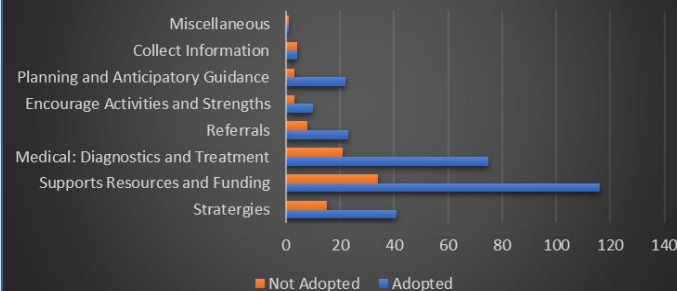3- How did this impact the physician's practice?

GRAPHS & RESULTS

Overall Adoption Success of Recommendations

Not Adopted 23%
Adopted 77%

- Recommendations
- Adopted
- Not Adopted

Adoption percentage

73.21 77.33 78.125 74.193 76.92 88 50 50

strategies | Supports Resources... | Medical: Diagnostics... | Referrals | Encourage Activities... | Planning and... | Collect Information | Miscellaneous

Frequencies of Recommendations (Adopted vs Not Adopted)

Miscellaneous
Collect Information
Planning and Anticipatory Guidance
Encourage Activities and Strengths
Referrals
Medical: Diagnostics and Treatment
Supports Resources and Funding
Strategies

0   20   40   60   80   100   120   140

- Not Adopted
- Adopted

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The impact of Recommendations on physicians' practice

16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0

Yes | No | N/A

- Did physicians pursue new approach?
- Impact of other presentations: changed practice
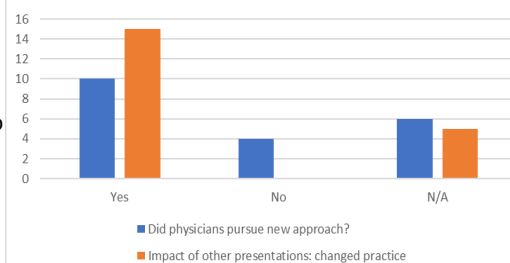
Reasons for Declining Recommendations (%)

2.56 7.69
5.13
7.69
2.56
35.89

12.82

5.13
2.56
2.56
2.56

- Family Declined
- No time
- No funding
- Test came normal before
- Physician forgot
- Family had enough recs
- Physician's descretion
- Child didn't want to
- Not available in area/Can't find
- Already done in school
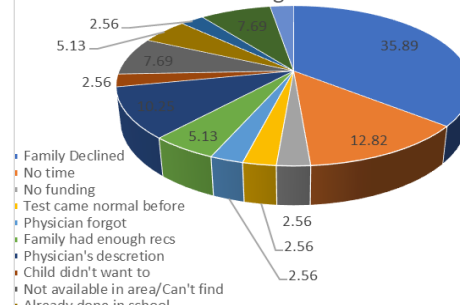
METHODS

- A Content Analysis was performed on post-case surveys that were completed by practitioners after they presented their cases and received ECHO recommendations.
- The post-case surveys were analyzed to categorize what recommendations were found to be more useful/adopted frequently and which were not.
- Lastly, the impact on Physicians practice of these recommendations was assessed.

STEPS FOR CODING THE ANALYSIS

1. Two independent coders created codes for 5 surveys.
2. The two coders then co-developed a coding guide from these codes.
3. The coding guide was used to code the remaining surveys. Updates to the guide were made in the process.
4. Analytic memos were collected, and an audit trail of the entire process was maintained.
5. Codes were then categorized into overarching categories and frequencies were reported of each.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND SAMPLE STATS

20 Physician's post-case presentation survey responses, regarding the uptake of recommendations were reported by an aggregate of 14 Physicians.

- Physician's ages ranged from 32-69 (M= 44.4, SD= 10.0). The sex distribution was 21.5 % Males and 78.6% Females.
- Their years in practice ranged from 1-37 (M = 13, SD= 10.6), with a total estimate no. of patients being 100-500 (M = 1585.7, SD= 1420), of which 3-1200 (M= 219.1, SD= 330.6) were cases with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- While 42.8 % did not have ASD related training, 57.1% had some training. 93% of them were general pediatricians and, 7% were family physicians. 85.7 % of the physicians had a private practice (of which 41.6 % worked additionally at a non-academic hospital), 7 % worked at an academic hospital and another 7 % at community health.

DISCUSSION

Current analysis shows that Project ECHO Ontario Autism shows significant promise in making specialized autism healthcare more accessible through its recommendation program. The rate of adoption of recommendations is high, and many physicians felt it had a positive impact on their practice and, also made them pursue newer directions.

NEXT STEPS:

- **Current evaluation is statistical, but a more interpretive approach to the analysis may help us understand why some recommendations were adopted and some not.**
- **Future directions include understanding the implication of this data on future ECHO sessions and how to better evolve the ECHO project based on recommendation adoption patterns.**

REFERENCES

Block, S. (2013). Rising Inequality, Declining Health. *Wellsley Institute.*
Block, S. (2013, July 29). Rising Inequality, Declining Health: New Report. *Wellsley Institute.*
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