Fort Collins Street Medicine Clinic: Development and Implementation of Student Run Free Clinic During Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship

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Abstract

People Experiencing Homelessness (PEH) have higher morbidity and mortality, associated mental health and psychiatric illness, infectious diseases, age-related conditions and chronic cardiovascular and metabolic diseases compared to the housed population. PEH who are pet-owners experience increased barriers to care as healthcare facilities, among other public services like transportation and shelters, do not allow pets. The Fort Collins Street Medicine Clinic (FCSMC) was created in conjunction with the Street Dog Coalition (SDC), a free veterinary services clinic for pets of PEH, and the Murphy Center, a day shelter for PEH, to provide greater access to care for this vulnerable population.

Introduction

Significance

● Larimer county has highest proportion of PEH homelessness outside of Denver and Colorado Springs. Up to 6% of PEH are pet-owners. PEH with pets have limited options for healthcare.

Goals of FCSMC

Provide thoughtful primary care to pet-owning PEH in Fort Collins
Address barriers to care for this population through engaged discourse
Engage students early on in serving underserved through exposure to impactful primary care

Methodology

The FCSMC was created by third year medical students in a Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship (LIC). Development was led by medical students in conjunction with community organizations. Meetings with stakeholders, grant writing, administrative development and clinic hours were held in pre-scheduled LIC independent learning time.

Results

Clinic operates weekly, serves 2-4 patients
Services include: wound care, medication refills, referral for social services and to establish primary care
Staffed by volunteer community physicians, advanced practice providers, medical students and undergraduate students
Awarded grant from CUSOM for supplies
Interdisciplinary case-based didactic sessions held with veterinary team at beginning of each session
Very positive informal feedback from patients, volunteers and community stakeholders so far

Discussion

The FCSMC currently operates weekly. Services provided include wound care, medication refills, referring to social services, and establishing primary care appointments with community clinics. The FCSMC is staffed by volunteer community physicians, advanced practice providers, medical students, and undergraduate students.

Future Directions

● Expand scope of engagement beyond PEH with pets
● Potential opportunity for backpack medicine
● Mobile outreach via health district
● Incorporation of mental health services

Research opportunities:

● Investigate barriers to underutilization of medical aid
● Quantitative analysis of disease prevalence amongst this population

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References