

Primary Care Physicians' Perspectives on the Promotion of Flourishing in Patients: A Pilot Study

Objective

The primary objective is to develop an understanding of primary care physicians' perspectives on promoting flourishing in the primary care clinical setting. We aim to (1) identify common themes and their frequency in interviews of primary care physicians on providers' understanding of flourishing, how providers practice promotion of flourishing to their patients, the feasibility of promoting flourishing in clinical care, and barriers providers have faced or anticipate facing when promoting flourishing to their patients and to (2) identify in interviews of primary care physicians to what extent providers assess or anticipate assessing flourishing in their patients using established flourishing assessment tools.

Motivation

The World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and **not merely the absence of disease or infirmity**"¹. Although family medicine physicians primarily approach medicine using the biopsychosocial model, there may be variance in that approach among primary care providers, and guidelines put forth by the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) may not satisfy the WHO's definition of health². If a patient screens negative for depression or anxiety, should a primary care physician do more to improve the patient's well-being?

What is flourishing?

One leading expert, VanderWeele, has identified five domains of human life that one needs to do well in order to be flourishing³:



Approach

We will conduct semi-structured interviews with primary care family medicine and internal medicine attending and resident physicians working in the Greater Hartford area (expected n=10) to understand their perspective on flourishing promotion. Based on the interview responses, we will perform a qualitative analysis using Taguette in order to identify common themes and patterns on their perspective on flourishing promotion in the primary care clinical setting.



Future Plans

- Develop recommendations for PCPs to incorporate flourishing promotion into clinical practice based on responses from interviewees
- Expand research to include increased and varied participant pool
- Pilot incorporation of flourishing promotion into clinical practice and study success via physicians' and patients' perspectives +/- measuring patient flourishing score

If you want to learn more about flourishing...

- Multiple exercises physicians can encourage patients to adopt within the flourishing domains VanderWeele describes can be found in the following article: VanderWeele, Tyler J. "Activities for Flourishing: An Evidence-Based Guide." *Journal of Positive School Psychology* (2020): 79-91.
- You can assess your score on VanderWeele's flourishing index here: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/05/04/well/mind/languishing-definition-flourishing-quiz.html>
- More information about flourishing can be found at Human Flourishing Program at Harvard's Institute for Quantitative Social Science

References

1. Constitution of the World Health Organization. 22 July 1946. Web. 18 November 2020.
2. Baird, Macaran A., et al. "Fifty Years of Contributions of Behavioral Science in Family Medicine." *Family Medicine* (2017): 296-303.
3. VanderWeele, Tyler J. "On the promotion of human flourishing." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* (2017): 8148-8156.