



Utilization of a Novel Inter-Specialty Consultation Service with Dentistry

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PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE

- The goal of this study was to describe an innovative peer support program called Physician Direct Connect (PDC). Utilized by a major children's hospital, this allows provider-to-provider communication for direct medical professional consultation with other medical professionals and specialists, including dentistry.

METHODS

- Data collection completed on all PDC encounters from 2009-2023 and descriptive analysis completed.
- Data summaries organized into groupings based on researcher expertise and chart review.

RESULTS

- 1155 individual patient encounters identified
 - >50% of referrals to the emergency department (ED) following consultation were for dental trauma
 - Physicians were the consulting provider in >80% of encounters
 - Urgent Care facilities were responsible for most dentistry consultation requests
 - Nearly 50% of the consultations were resolved with consultation alone with no recommendation for ED or clinic follow up
 - Fewer than 30% of the patient's receiving consultation had private/commercial insurance, and nearly 50% had Medicaid

Call Disposition

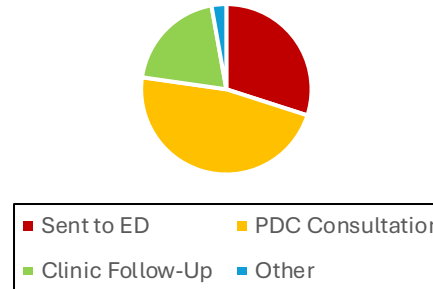


Figure 1. Call Disposition categorized by recommendations from Dentistry

Reason for Consultation

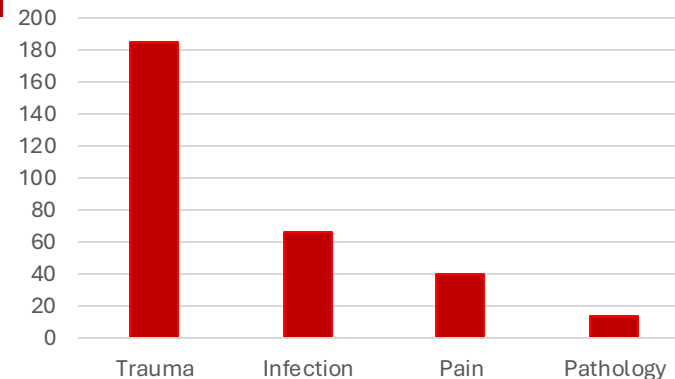


Figure 2. Call Reason of patients who were transferred to the ED

DISCUSSION

- Use of this service may decrease the number of emergency department visits for dental issues.
 - Nearly 850 patient concerns were able to be addressed without requiring a visit to the ED
 - This decreases the financial burden for families as well as for the healthcare system as a whole
- This data demonstrates potential gaps in medical provider education regarding dental concerns that may allow for curriculum changes to improve patient care.

CONCLUSION

- The utilization of PDC for dentistry has aided in the care of many dental problems while limiting hospital transfers to only those that require urgent intervention.
- Telehealth use is on the rise and the integration of dentistry provides improved access to specialty care.

REFERENCES

