

UPMC McKeesport

Annual Progress Report: 2008 Formula Grant

Reporting Period

July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

Formula Grant Overview

The UPMC McKeesport received \$53,071 in formula funds for the grant award period January 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010. Accomplishments for the reporting period are described below.

Research Project 1: Project Title and Purpose

Analysis of Emergency Department Elopements Over Time - The purpose of the analysis is to measure the effectiveness of a newly initiated program as it relates to Emergency Department elopements. This analysis is not part of the new initiative but we anticipate that it will have an effect on elopements and therefore measure an unanticipated benefit that may be replicated in other community settings.

Duration of Project

1/1/2009 - 6/30/2010

Project Overview

The aims of this study will be to analyze hospital specific summary data related to elopements from the UPMC McKeesport Emergency Department (ED), to measure the impact of the new initiative, and to aid in implementation of corrective actions based on this data analysis so as to reduce the overall incidence of ED elopements.

An elopement for this purpose is defined as any individual who has been seen by the Triage Nurse but left prior to an evaluation by the Emergency Department physician, or who has been seen by the Emergency Department physician but left before treatment or disposition.

Principal Investigator

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Other Participating Researchers

Susan Mammarella – Project Coordinator
Scott Weinman – Data Manager
Yazan Roumani - Biostatistician

Expected Research Outcomes and Benefits

Individuals who leave the Emergency Department without receiving treatment may be ill and therefore not receive the appropriate care to treat the medical condition for which they are presenting. Furthermore, the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA) requires a federally mandated medical screening examination and failure to perform such an examination may be construed as a violation of this act. In addition the hospital may suffer economic hardship by losing revenue associated with these visits. UPMC McKeesport is initiating a new program whereby a “medical home” for individuals, on Medical Assistance who are treated at the Emergency Department, will be established. Most often these individuals do not have an established physician. The aforementioned program does not address the issue of elopements and we are therefore proposing an important strategic project with the Formula Funds to study the possible effect on elopements that have been a long time problem for this community setting.

Analysis of the information and data will permit the redesign of processes aimed at improving the timeliness of patient care, providing care appropriate to treat the individual and preventing loss of revenue. Also we hope to demonstrate a reduction in elopements due to implementation of the “medical home” program.

Summary of Research Completed

Over the past year there have been some staffing changes related to the project that caused a slight delay in the project. Ms. Claire Daday, the original project coordinator is no longer with UPMC McKeesport and Ms. Susan Mammarella assumed this role. Ms. Mammarella also serves as chief financial officer of the hospital and has a special interest not only in the financial implications of elopements but a desire to implement appropriate actions that may lead to improvement in patient care and patient satisfaction. She was responsible for day-to-day monitoring and reporting on the project. Mr. Scott Weinman was appointed to serve as data manager. He is highly qualified and detail oriented particularly with respect to cleaning and presentation of the data to be analyzed. Mr. Yazan F. Roumani, MS, MBA served as biostatistician. Mr. Roumani has served UPMC McKeesport faculty as an instructor in biostatistics for the residency program. Ms. Barbara Klewien, grant administrator, performed project monitoring to assure conformance with hospital policy related to research projects.

It should be noted that with this team, assembled by mid-2009, the project quickly achieved the scheduled timelines for work product. Quarterly team meetings were held to monitor progress and resolve any possible problems. These meetings were uneventful relative to any impediments to progress and served to provide a smooth dynamic to ensure excellent and efficient communication among the team members.

The team did evaluate the data elements to be analyzed and the original list of elements was deemed to be somewhat ambitious with too broad of a focus. As a result the following data elements were excluded from the proposed analysis:

- ED occupancy level
- Waiting count
- Boarding count
- Length of stay

While these data may provide information related to possible wait times and subsequent elopements, this dynamic is not the subject of this analysis. In addition, elopements related to waiting time in the ED is not novel having been studied over the years.

Data collection for the pre-navigator time period (April 2008 – March 2009) was achieved by September 2009. Data collection for post navigator period (April 2009 – March 2010) was completed by May 2010. These data were imported into Microsoft Excel Spreadsheets for easy review and transition to the biostatistician.

In May of 2010 Yazan Roumani, biostatistician, was provided with the spreadsheets for review. After some clarification of definitions and patient status categories, Mr. Roumani complimented the team on a clean data transmission. The analysis was carried out throughout May and June 2010.