The Importance of Continuity of Care in Children with Asthma

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Commentary:

Continuity of care (COC) means the condition of “care over time by a single individual or team of health professionals,” [1] which is a cornerstone of primary care. With continuous care, patients tend to have higher quality of care, i.e., greater satisfaction, decreased emergency department (ED) visits and hospitalizations, and improved receipt of preventive services [2]. Physicians who have long-term relationships with their patients may better manage the chronic diseases because they are more familiar with their patients’ medical history and can effectively communicate with their patients. This was particularly found in patients with asthma. Love et al. [3] found a positive correlation between COC and patient perceptions of physician-patient communication.

Therefore, Cabana et al. [13] found that if patients with asthma who discharged from ED presented for outpatient follow-up, they had an increased likelihood for repeat ED asthma visits. For these patients, continuity of care should strongly be enhanced. Therefore, improving the COC becomes important for the patients with asthma and healthcare providers. The healthcare providers could actively make the follow-up visit appointment and remind the patient (or the parent/carer) in advance. Government could initiate pay-for-performance program of asthma to motivate physicians and patients to improve the COC and self-care ability for reducing the ED visit and hospitalization.

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References


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