Understanding Factors that Influence Pregnant and Parenting Teenagers to Seek Medical Care for Themselves and Their Children in the Emergency Room versus with their Primary Care Providers

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Et al.

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Understanding factors that influence pregnant and parenting teenagers to seek medical care for themselves and their children in the emergency room versus with their primary care providers

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INTRODUCTION

- Emergency room (ER) overuse is an increasingly important topic for healthcare systems in light of high costs and a shortage of primary care providers (PCPs).
- Teen Living Program (TLP) is a resident shelter in Worcester for pregnant and parenting teenagers. These teens have reported frequent use of the ER.
- Little is known about what factors influence patients to visit the emergency room, and no studies have focused on adolescents.
- We hypothesized that they seek medical care at the ER instead of their PCPs because of convenience, cost, and trust.

METHODS

- DESIGN
  - Two focus groups
  - Semi-structured interview guide
  - Digitally recorded
  - Transcribed verbatim
- PARTICIPANTS (N=10)
  - Recruited from TLP
  - Age: 17 to 21 years
  - Gender: Female
  - Race/Ethnicity: 40% White, 20% Black, 20% Hispanic, 10% Multiracial, 10% other
- ANALYSIS
  - Data categorized using qualitative content analysis techniques
  - Transcripts coded by 1 investigator, through which major themes were identified and exemplary quotes selected

RESULTS

Positive Perceptions of Providers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>EXEMPLARY QUOTES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>“Like I would give them my 100% trust but once I found out that you did something that I can’t trust you no more you lost my complete trust because I feel like if he’s gonna be a doctor, you have to trust em.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>“To have a physician that actually shows that they actually care and when they walk in the room they’re like oh how are you? Last time that you said you were how’s college? Like they know about you, that’s when I’m more comfortable. … That’s a good doctor.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>“Like no, I like a doctor that gets it done. Like they say they’re gonna do it, they’re gonna do it and it’s gonna be done right then and there.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative Perceptions of Providers</td>
<td>“I loved them. You would call – it would be like 3:30 in the morning and they would call you back like that [snap] and it was like mad quick cause my daughter used to be like constantly like…so I used to call a lot.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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IMPLICATIONS

- Efforts are needed to help adolescents understand the process of where to go for medical care.
- Providers and the medical system also should be aware of the value of trust in choosing medical care and develop strategies to improve trust with patients.

LIMITATIONS

- Small sample size
- Focus group participants all recruited from one city and one program
- Findings may not be generalizable.