

Evaluating the Benefits of Medicare Annual Wellness Visits

Abstract

This quality-improvement project used both applied and exploratory research to assist in evaluating the potential benefits of Medicare's Annual Wellness Visit (AWV). The researcher reviewed data gathered from patients' charts who had received an AWV in 2020, 2021, and 2022 (n=42). A Wilcoxon Signed Rank test compared the data for changes in health status. Additionally, a two-item researcher-generated survey was administered to discover the patient's perspective regarding benefit of the Medicare AWV (n=48). The two-item survey was analyzed using measures of central tendency. The data collected showed statistical significance of change to be noted in depression (increase), cognition (decrease), urinary incontinence (increase), use of shingles vaccine (increase), fall risk (increase), and muscle strengthening exercises (decrease). These changes, often inevitable, can be seen as a benefit of yearly AWVs as they represent early identification and should lead to early treatment. Data collected showed, but were not statistically significant, that an increase in compliance for patients in generalized physical activity, and an increased intake of fruits/vegetables took place. More patients had initiated a legal plan of care, received their annual diabetic eye exams and colorectal cancer screening in 2022 than 2020. The two-item perceived benefit survey demonstrated that the greater percentage of patients were very satisfied and agreed completely that the AWV improved their health. If a patient participates annually in their AWVs, they can identify issues in a variety of healthcare related matters earlier.