HIV eConsult

The eConsultBASE™ service improves access to specialist care for patients by facilitating electronic communication between primary care providers (PCPs) and specialists.

From February 2015 to December 2017, 21 PCPs submitted 46 eConsults to HIV specialists. We conducted a convergent parallel design mixed methods study of those eConsult cases.

The HIV specialists included:
- Medical HIV specialists
- HIV pediatrics
- HIV pharmacists
- Social workers with HIV expertise

Care for people with HIV is complex
HIV is best managed by PCPs collaborating with HIV specialists
eConsult can facilitate communication and education between PCPs and HIV specialists

The most common questions from PCPs pertained to:
- 59% Drug Treatment
- 20% Management
- 13% Diagnosis
- 4% Administrative
- 2% Epidemiology
- 2% No Specific Question

Contents of the eConsults involved:
- The complexities of care for people living with HIV
- Suggestions for coordinated patient care
- Advice on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV-negative patients at risk of HIV infections

PCPs highly valued the eConsult service (average rating 4.8/5)

PCP Course of Action

- PCPs received advice for a new or additional course of action: 59%
- PCPs were able to confirm original course of action: 41%
- Referral was originally contemplated but now avoided: 11%

Median response time was 1.75 days
63% of cases took 15 minutes or less to complete

Impact
- eConsult is an efficient and valuable service to PCPs caring for patients living with or at risk for HIV
- Improves access to HIV specialists
- Facilitates the delivery of team-based comprehensive care

Case Example

PCP asks specialist about patient whose partner is HIV positive. Patient has had multiple HIV tests, all negative, and is looking for recommendations for prophylaxis and further viral testing. PCP includes patient's medical history and list of current medications.

Specialist reviews case and recommends condom use and HIV testing every 6 months. Specialist cites benefits of Truvada. Specialist provides details for referral if patient has further questions.

Specialist recommends PrEP. PCP accepts advice, closes case.

Contact: Dr. Clare Liddy, cliddy@uottawa.ca