Ambulatory and Primary Care

Presentation Objectives

- Define ambulatory care
- Define primary care
- Explain subsets of ambulatory care
- Explain ambulatory care and accreditation
- Challenges and future of ambulatory care

What is Ambulatory Care?

- Define ambulatory care
- Define primary care
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What is Ambulatory care?

- Personal health care provided to individuals who are not occupying a bed in a health care institution or in a health facility.
- Ambulatory care vs. primary care
- Follow-up care following inpatient episodes
- A contemporaneous shift to ambulatory care

Where is Ambulatory Care Service Provided?

In a variety of settings, including:

- Freestanding provider offices
- Hospital-based clinics
- School-based clinics
- Public health clinics
- Community health centers

Ambulatory Care Visits

Number of Ambulatory Care Visits

Ambulatory Care Visits: Physician visits by Race

Number of Ambulatory Visits by Race

Annual rate of visits to office-based physicians by patient race and ethnicity


Source: US Dept. of HHS 2000

National Center for Health Statistics. 2006
• Two major categories
  1. Physicians offices (solo, group, managed care)
  2. Hospital based ambulatory services
    - Clinics
    - Hospital sponsored group practice
    - Health promotion centers
    - Free standing surgical centers
    - Etc...

Composition of total ambulatory care visits

Reasons for physician office visits

Why do people go to the physician’s office?
Primary care is the provision of integrated, accessible health care services by professionals who are accountable for addressing a large majority of personal health care needs, developing a sustained partnership with patients, and practicing in the context of family and community (Institute of Medicine, 1999)

- Keywords
  - Community
  - Sustained partnership
Primary Care Providers

- The providers of Primary Care fall into four major disciplines:
  - Physicians
  - Nurse Practitioners (NP)
  - Midwives
  - Physician Assistants (PAs)

Percent of services delivered by Primary care providers

Out Patient Visit: Children under 18

- Outpatient department visits
- Physician office visits

- Number of visits per 100 persons
  - Non-Hispanic black or African American
  - Non-Hispanic white
  - Hispanic

2. Out Patient Visit: by source of payment: 2004

- Percent visits
  - Private insurers
  - Medicaid or SCHIP
  - Medicare
  - Self-pay
  - Other or unknown

3. Out Patient Visit
   Rising role of midlevel providers

- Percent visits
  - Midlevel provider and physician
  - Only midlevel provider

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Subsets of Ambulatory Care

1. Emergency Care

Emergency Care Service

- Definition:
  - Inpatient and outpatient services needed to evaluate or stabilize an emergency medical condition
  - An emergency medical condition: one that manifests itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity
The U.S. Emergency System

- 911 Response System
- Hospital based emergency services
  - Different levels of trauma hospitals
  - 24/7 capability
  - Over 92.6% of hospitals have an ED
    - Treatment for acutely ill, injured, walk ins
    - Evaluation prior to admission
    - Volume: approximately 100 million

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Emergency care (contd.)

- Categories of patients entering through the ER
  1. **Emergent**: Patient should be seen in less than 15 minutes.
  2. **Urgent**: Patient should be seen within 15-60 minutes.
  3. **Semi-urgent**: Patient should be seen within 1-2 hours
  4. **Non-urgent**: Patient should be seen within 24 hours.

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Categories of patients receiving emergency care

- **Emergent**: 13%
- **Urgent**: 38%
- **Semi-urgent**: 22%
- **Non-urgent**: 12%
- Unknown (no triage): 12%
Relevant Developments
Emergency Care

- Walk-in units to relieve the volume of emergency services
- Financial pressure to divert non-urgent patients
- Pre-emergency department care
© What time is it?

Average length of time for duration of office visits and emergency department waiting times

© ER Visit: Seasonal variation in selected reasons by Calendar Quarter

National Center for Health Statistics. 2006

© ER Visit: by Age Group: 2004

National Center for Health Statistics. 2006
2. Subspecialty Care

Subspecialty Care

- **Definition**
  - Care given by physicians who are not generalists
  - Ambulatory
  - Generalists: family medicine, general pediatrics, general internal medicine, geriatric medicine, and general OBGYN
  - Subspecialists: all others
    - Care that is not appropriate in primary care setting
    - Referral through primary or direct contact by patient

From inpatient to ambulatory Surgery

![Graph showing surgeries per 1000 people from 1994 to 1998](chart.png)
Growth in percentage of outpatient surgeries

Percent of surgeries performed in ambulatory settings

3. Home Health Care

Home Health Care

• What is it?
  – A wide variety of care services provided or delivered to the patient’s home
  – Typically ordered by a physician and medically necessary
  – Per visit versus per hour
  – Who gets it?
It can be high tech...

- Infusion Therapy (IV/pumps)
- Home Uterine Monitoring
- Ventilator Management
- Heparin Therapy (anti-coagulant)
- Chemotherapy
- Compounding of Drugs
- Diagnostic Services, Lab/x-ray

Skilled Professional home health agency services include:

- Nursing provided by a registered nurse (RN), nurse practitioner (NP), or a licensed practical nurse (LPN).
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Therapy
- Medical Social Work
- Respiratory Therapy

It can also be not-so-high skilled labor

Paraprofessional home health agency services include:

- Home Health Aides
- Personal Care Assistants
- Physical Therapy Assistants
- Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants (COTA)

Custodial home care services include:

- Homemaker and housekeeping
- Companions
- Private duty help
- Live-in services
- Hourly or shift coverage

Mostly for aged population and in recovery/rehab phases from major procedures
Home Medical Equipment services include providing durable medical equipment, such as:

- Artificial limbs
- Prosthetics
- Beds
- Braces
- Canes
- Crutches
- Wheelchairs
- Commodes
- Respiratory equipment (concentrators)
- Oxygen

An Example: Hospice Care

- Hospice care at home is often preferred by patients:
  - Psychologically better
  - Emotionally better
  - Spiritually better
- Palliative care, pain management, physician services, etc...

4. Complementary & Alternative Medical Care
What is complementary and alternative medical care?

• In 1992, Congress established the Office of Alternative Medicine (OAM)
  – Determine effectiveness of alternative medical care
• National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM)
  – “those treatments and healthcare practices not taught widely in medical schools, not generally used in hospitals, and not usually reimbursed by medical insurance companies”

Types of CAM practices with examples

1. Alternative Medical systems – Ayurveda, homeopathy, naturopathy
2. Mind-Body Interventions – use of hypnosis, dance, music, art therapy, prayer and mental healing
3. Biological-Based Therapies – herbal, special dietary
4. Manipulative and Body-Based Methods – chiropractic, some osteopathic and massage therapy
5. Energy Therapies - magnetic, bio-electro-magnetic, therapeutic touch etc.

Utilization in the U.S.

• Estimated 629 million visits to CAM providers in 1997
• South Carolina study:
  – 44% of adults had used CAM
  – 60% perceived CAM as very effective
• Physicians were unaware of CAM use in 75% of their patients

(Source: Oldendick, Coker, Wieland, et al 2000; Southern Medical Journal, 93, 375-381)
• JCAHO established the Ambulatory Health Care accreditation program in 1975
• Ambulatory care facilities covered include
  – Ambulatory surgery centers, Community health centers, Group medical practices, Indian health clinics, Military clinics, Mobile services, Multispecialty group practices, Occupational health centers, Office-based surgery offices, Physician offices, Prison health centers, Student health services

• A note on JCAHO and its surveyors
  – Not-for-profit
  – Highly experienced
  – Strong educational background
• An organization may be accredited as follows:
  – Accreditation with Full Standards Compliance
  – Accreditation with Requirements for Improvement
  – Provisional Accreditation
  – Conditional Accreditation
  – Preliminary Denial of Accreditation
  – Accreditation Denied
  – Accreditation Watch
  – Accreditation with Commendation
Accreditation vs. Licensure or Certification

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Example list of ambulatory care organizations that seek accreditation
(Source: NCCAM)

- Birthing centers
- Cardiac catheterization centers
- Dental clinics
- Dialysis centers
- Endoscopy centers
- Imaging centers
- Infusion therapy services
- Laser centers
- Lithotripsy services
- MRI centers
- Ophthalmology practices
- Oral and maxillofacial surgery centers
- Plastic surgery centers
- Podiatric clinics
- Radiation/oncology clinics
- Rehabilitation centers
- Sleep centers
- Urgent/emergency care centers
- Women's health centers

Challenges
- Define ambulatory care
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Current Issues in Ambulatory care

1. Access to care: factors are
   - Limited or no insurance coverage
   - Geographical location
   - Language barrier
   - Cultural barrier etc.

2. Cost Containment: factors are
   - Increasing cost of drugs
   - Cost of new technologies

3. Quality Improvement: factors are
   - Under-use of known treatments that can improve health
   - Over-use of treatment with no positive impact on health
   - Misuse of treatment
   - Economic condition

The Challenges Restated

Today's health care environment is changing rapidly, and ambulatory care providers are experiencing new competitive pressures in the health care marketplace.

Providing high-quality care to patients and continually improving performance are benchmarks of success, but it is increasingly important to demonstrate quality of care to payers, regulatory agencies, and managed care organizations.

A growing number of ambulatory care organizations seek Joint Commission accreditation because they want to be represented nationally as high-quality patient care providers.

Data for the interested

Useful Website for Ambulatory Care Data
http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/ahcd/ahcd1.htm