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Project: *What matters to you(th) preparing for adult health care: A mixed-methods approach to improving readiness assessments*



Background

The transition to adult health care for youth with chronic health and/or mental health conditions is a period of high risk for decreased routine clinic appointments, health deterioration and poor adherence to management. In North America, 15% of youth have a chronic health condition and 90% of these youth will require transfer from pediatric to adult services. Up to 20% of youth have at least one mental health condition, with 70% persisting into adulthood requiring the transfer to adult mental health services.

Measures to assess readiness to transition utilize mostly skill-based questions such as “can you fill your prescriptions?” and “do you call the doctor’s office to make appointments?”; these measurements examine aspects of transition that may be more important to clinicians than youth. Several tools to assess transition readiness exist, however, very few of these measures were developed with those who have lived experience, creating a gap in our understanding of what aspects of transition readiness are

important to youth. Co-designed tools, which are co-created with youth and other stakeholders, are needed to ensure the transition readiness data being collected is meaningful, relevant, and important to them.

Using a patient-oriented, mixed methods approach this study will evaluate the effectiveness of transition readiness assessments in preparing youth for transition to adult health care by examining readiness assessment scores over a 24-month period and analyzing clinical case notes for observed transition behaviours. Data will be obtained from the Transition Navigator Trial, a pragmatic randomized controlled trial in Alberta which tested the effectiveness of patient navigator intervention during transition to adult care for young adults with chronic health conditions. Integrated results of this project will provide insight as to whether transition readiness assessments are accurately measuring readiness behaviours. We anticipate that transition readiness measurements may be missing important factors of readiness and will not be useful in predicting transition behaviours in youth. Additionally, this study will advance the knowledge and implementation of patient-oriented research methodologies in a graduate-level project by partnering with a transition-specific advisory council to highlight the perspectives of youth with lived expertise.

This project will be conducted in partnership with the Transition Research Advisory Council (TRAC), to highlight the perspectives and expertise of those with experience transitioning to the adult health care system. Guiding principles of patient-oriented research will be applied to engage TRAC members meaningfully throughout all phases of the project including research design, interpretation of results, and the co-creation of knowledge translation outputs.

Results of this study will provide evidence and rationale for future research to develop more appropriate and useful transition readiness assessments. A successful transition from pediatric to adult healthcare is crucial in ensuring the future health and wellness of adolescents with chronic conditions. Understanding how we can prepare youth to feel confident in their skills and independence will result in higher chances of a seamless transition to adult health care. With a strong patient-oriented research approach, the results of this proposed study have the potential to be a driving force for the creation of relevant and appropriate transition preparations.

Megan is a MSc student in Community Health Sciences specializing in Health Services Research at the University of Calgary. As an aspiring health services researcher, she is passionate about using patient-oriented research to improve health and mental health systems for young adults. Her thesis project will focus on evaluating transition readiness assessments for youth transitioning from pediatric to adult health care.

