Perceived Communication with Providers and Associated Racial Disparities in US Older Adults with Multiple Chronic Conditions

Jun Wu[1] Z. Kevin Lu[2] Mary Lynn Davis-Ajami[3]

[1]Presbyterian College School of Pharmacy, Clinton, SC, USA, [2]University of South Carolina College of Pharmacy, Columbia, SC, USA [3]Indiana University School of Nursing, Bloomington, IN, USA

INTRODUCTION

- Nearly 65% of US older adults have two or more chronic conditions. These people may experience more fragmented care than those without multiple chronic conditions (MCC), with an estimated 65% needing specialist care.
- Due to the complexity of disease management, communication between patients and physicians represents an important element in patient-centered care and is critical to helping persons with MCC achieve treatment goals.
- While we know racial and ethnic disparities exist regarding the patient experience in the US general population, few studies have examined the patient perceived communication with providers in older adults with MCC.

OBJECTIVES

- Describe the overall trend of perceived physician-patient communication in older adults with MCC.
- Identify racial disparities in perceived communication with providers.

METHODS

Data source

- US Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) Household Component data (2013, 2015, 2017, 2019)

Study sample

- Respondents with positive personal weights
- Respondents (≥ 65 years) with at least two chronic conditions
- Respondents with valid responses to the survey questions about the physician's communication during non-emergency visits in last 12 months

Outcome measures and analysis

- Experience with four aspects of physician-patient communication: How often health providers (1) listened carefully to patients; (2) explained things clearly; (3) showed respect; and (4) spent enough time
- Response options (never, sometimes, usually, and always) were collapsed into (always and not always) for analysis.
- Cochran-Armitage trend tests examined the statistical significance of the trends.
- Logistic regression identified racial disparities in perceived communication with providers.

RESULTS

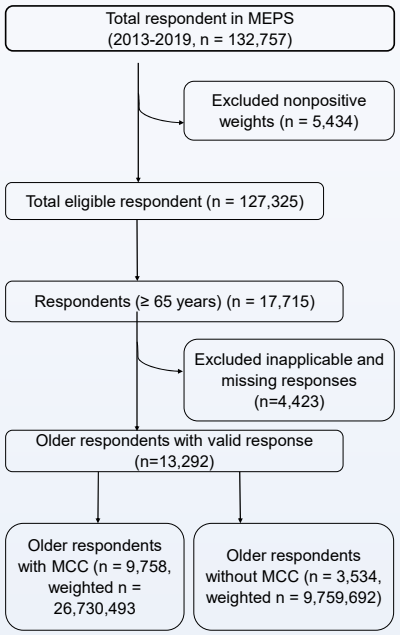

Figure 1 Study sample

RESULTS

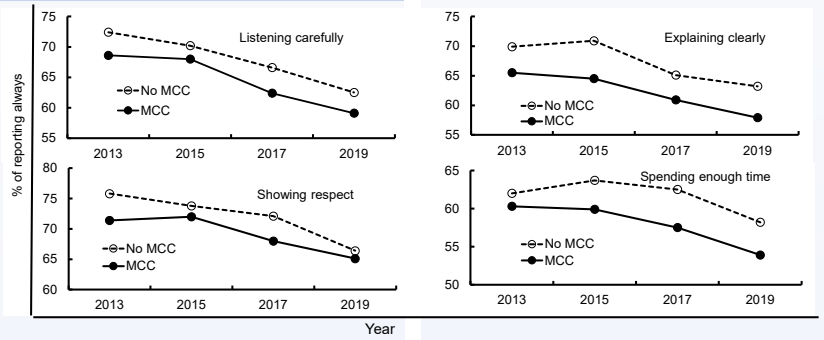

Figure 2 Trends of reporting "always" in communication measures in older adults (MCC vs. no MCC) from 2013 to 2019 (n=13,292)

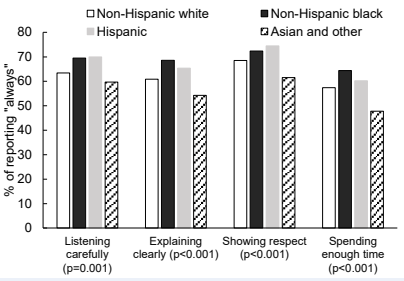

Figure 3 Overall racial disparities of reporting "always" in communication measures in older adults with MCC (n=9,758)

RESULTS

Table 1 Association between race and patient-physician communication in older adults with MCC after adjusting for characteristics (n=9,758)

Variable	OR (95% CI)			
	Listening carefully	Explaining clearly	Showing respect	Spending enough time
Race				
Non-Hispanic White	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Non-Hispanic Black	1.44 (1.24, 1.68)	1.51 (1.30, 1.74)	1.28 (1.08, 1.52)	1.41 (1.22, 1.63)
Hispanic	1.34 (1.09, 1.66)	1.33 (1.10, 1.56)	1.44 (1.15, 1.80)	1.17 (0.96, 1.43)
Asian and other	0.92 (0.73, 1.15)	0.79 (0.64, 0.98)	0.77 (0.60, 0.97)	0.71 (0.55, 0.92)

CONCLUSIONS

- The rates of always reporting positive communication with providers significantly declined from 2013 to 2019 in older adults with MCC.
- Hispanics and non-Hispanic Blacks were more likely to report positive experience with providers than other races.

Contact: Jun Wu, PhD, Presbyterian College School of Pharmacy, jwu@presby.edu