ABSTRACT TITLE: Assessing Patient Activation in Veterans with Chronic Liver Disease

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Problem: Chronic liver disease (CLD) is a significant cause of morbidity, mortality and health care utilization in the United States. It affects more than 5.5 million Americans with estimated health care costs of $1.6 billion annually. Individuals with CLD require complex disease management including promotion of healthy behaviors, preventative care, and medication management. No studies have examined the level of activation (the skills and confidence to manage their care) in Veterans with CLD.

Background/Evidence: A key component of effective health care for patients with chronic disease is increasing levels of activation. In other populations, higher patient activation levels have been associated with better outcomes. The promotion of disease self-management can help to empower patients and improve their health. This pilot study used a well validated measure, the Patient Activation Measure (PAM) to assess activation in Veterans with CLD. The PAM score allows the clinician to tailor the type and amount of support required to improve a Veteran's well-being. Activation can be increased over time with interventions tailored to individual needs.

Aim/Objectives: The aim of this study was to examine the distribution of PAM scores in two groups, Veterans with CLD and Veterans starting hepatitis C antiviral therapy.

Methods/Strategy: A cross-sectional survey study of 212 Veterans; patient activation was determined using the PAM which assesses patient knowledge, skill and confidence in self-health management.

Results: Both groups had high activation levels. The 157 Veterans with CLD had a mean PAM of 60.6(14.5 SD), and the 55 Veterans starting antiviral therapy had a mean PAM of 67(17.0 SD). There was a significant difference in the distribution of activation levels between the two groups X^2=8.84, p=.03.

Recommendations: These pilot data will be the basis for future studies designed to test targeted interventions based on Veterans' levels of activation.

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