

Title: Increased Compliance of Patients Referred to Genetic Counseling After Introduction of a Web-Based Risk-stratification Tool

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Introduction: Patient compliance with referrals plays a crucial role in accessing genetic counseling and risk stratification services. To address the challenge of ensuring patient follow-through with referral appointments, Medical City of Dallas (MCD) Genetics Clinic introduced a web-based risk-stratification tool. This user-friendly digital platform increased the number of referred patients attending appointments and reduced noncompliant referrals. By providing pre-test education videos, initial risk assessments, and visual representations of family history, this proactive strategy enhances access to genetic counseling services, effectively bridging the gap between physician referrals and patient attendance.

Methods: This retrospective study investigates the impact of the Ambry CARE program® on genetic counseling referrals at MCD. Utilizing a web-based risk-stratification tool, the program assesses breast cancer risk before standard appointments based on the Tyrer-Cuzick risk algorithm and NCCN® criteria. Referrals are compared before and after implementing the CARE program. Metrics include genetic counseling referrals, scheduled appointments, affected and unaffected probands, individuals opting for genetic testing, and testing outcomes. The tool contacts patients via text and Weblink and provides reminders for questionnaire completion.

Results: Before CARE implementation in 2021, 351 patients were scheduled for genetic counseling. After CARE initiation in March 2022, appointments increased to 391 by year-end, an 11% rise. By 2023, with full CARE implementation, patient appointments surged to 504, a 28% increase from 2022. The percentage of referred patients seen by genetic counselors rose over the years: 49% in 2021, 53% in 2022, and 57% in 2023. Additionally, compliance among affected patients increased from 20% in 2021 to 45% in 2023. In 2023, 26% of patients tested positive, compared to 23% in both 2022 and 2021.

Conclusion: Integrating the CARE platform into clinic workflow boosted genetic counseling appointment rates for referred patients and raised the percentage of referred patients seen in clinic. This integration potentially contributed to more patients with current or prior cancer diagnoses attending their genetic counseling appointments as recommended by their physicians.