University of Colorado
Department of Family Medicine

Mentored Scholarly Activities Program

Agenda

- Primary Care Research
  - What is Primary Care and What is Primary Care Research?
  - How is Primary Care Research unique?
  - What are the challenges, why is it needed?

- Introduce students and their MSA projects
- Introduce mentors in the DFM and their research.
What is Primary Care?

- Primary care is that care provided by physicians specifically trained for and skilled in comprehensive first contact and continuing care for persons with any undiagnosed sign, symptom, or health concern (the "undiagnosed" patient) not limited by problem origin (biological, behavioral, or social), organ system, or diagnosis.

American Academy of Family Physicians
Includes

- health promotion
- disease prevention
- health maintenance
- counseling
- patient education
Includes

- diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic illnesses in a variety of health care settings:
  - office, inpatient, critical care, long-term care, home care, day care
- collaboration with other health professionals
- utilizes consultation or referral as appropriate
Includes

- patient advocacy
- cost-effective
- care coordination
- effective communication with patients and encourages the role of the patient as a partner in health care
What is Primary Care Research?

- Research conducted in primary care settings related to the how primary healthcare is rendered, including the systems and policies that affect practices, it aims to improve overall care, rendering of care, and patient outcomes.

- Research that extends beyond traditional health services research to address a broad range of issues in the clinical and social sciences.
Major areas of Focus

- Integration of care
- Quality of care
- Accessibility of healthcare services
- Delivery of healthcare services
- Addressing full range of personal health needs
- Developing sustained partnerships with patients
- Family and community
Populations Studied

- children
- women
- historically under served racial and ethnic minorities
- low income populations
- Rural communities
- urban and inner city communities
- patients with special health care needs
  - chronically ill and multiple co-morbidities
  - disabled
  - patients at the end of life
The Translation...
NIH Roadmap for Medical Research
Primary Care Research Attributes

- Researching every day practice in complex “real world settings”
- Focuses on disseminating key research findings back into real-world practice and policy, and encouraging their implementation.
- Addresses services that are often ignored in other medical or health services research
- Chronic care, acute care, or preventive care.
- Includes studies of lifestyles and risk factors, as well as ways to change health behaviors
Challenges and needs

- $$$$: basic research
- Translating bench to practice has been underestimated
- Movement of bench to practice is actually very slow!
- Recommendations made are expert opinion or from tertiary care studies
- Specialty derived recommendations
- Not representative of primary care patient populations
- Questions about HOW to implement new guidelines often remain unanswered
- There is a gap between recommended care and actual care
- Optimal practice in primary care still needs to be defined
Practice based research

- Provides a laboratory for a broad range of needed studies
- Provides access to large numbers of patients to study
- Best setting for studying the process for care, the way diseases are diagnosed, treatments initiated and chronic conditions managed.
- Effectiveness can be measured
- Readiness to change and adopt new tx can be studied and addressed
- Patient preferences can be evaluated
- Interface between physician/patient can be explored and ultimately improve care.
DFM research areas

- Clinical Informatics
- Primary Care Practice-Based Research Networks (PBRNs)
- Effectiveness and Outcomes research
- Health Policy
- Service learning
- Rural healthcare