Promoting Awareness of Best Practices for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) in Primary Care: The Actionable Nuggets™ Strategy

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Project Goal:
To facilitate knowledge translation (KT) on FASD in primary care by developing and evaluating a set of Actionable Nuggets™ featuring current epidemiology on FASD and best practices for prevention, screening and intervention.

Rationale:
- Any amount of alcohol consumption during pregnancy can cause the fetus to experience neurological damage associated with a spectrum of lifelong cognitive, developmental, behavioral and occupational impairments broadly referred to as fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD).
- FASD affects 2-5% of Canadian school-aged population.
- FASD is the leading cause of developmental and cognitive disability in Canadians.
- Optimal outcomes in children and families affected by FASD linked to early detection.
- FASD is an invisible disability, highly stigmatized and symptoms often misdiagnosed as Autism or ADHD.
- FASD diagnosis is complex, occurring through comprehensive multidisciplinary assessment by specially trained clinicians.
- Primary care physicians are in the ideal position to address FASD in Canada; however, they are unsure of their role in diagnosis, intervention and prevention of FASD.
- Many primary care physicians unaware of the current body of knowledge on FASD, including epidemiology, screening strategies, diagnostic criteria or service availability.
- Primary care physicians resistant to conventional knowledge translation (KT) approaches.
- Actionable Nuggets™ strategy has been proven effective and useful by primary care physicians.

Design:
This project includes 3 methodologies:
1. Scoping review to identify and organize a comprehensive inventory of current literature and knowledge on FASD in primary care. This methodology will include the optional expert panel in order to identify best practices for inclusion in Actionable Nuggets™.
2. Physician interviews to ascertain perceived learning needs, solicit feedback on the utility of Actionable Nuggets™ for FASD, and to gather data on practice change.
3. Pre and post-test evaluation of physicians’ knowledge, attitudes, and practice reflection pertaining to FASD.

The Approach
Phase 1: Scoping Review of FASD in Canada
• Scoping review
  - Clear definition 6-stage framework:
    1. Identify the research question
    2. Identify relevant literature
    3. Select relevant literature
    4. Chart data
    5. Collate, summarize & report results
    6. Consult with key stakeholders

Phase 2: Physician Interviews
• Interview 20 Canadian primary care physicians
• Interview questions informed by results of Phase 1 and previous studies
• Physicians recruited in collaboration with the Office of Continuing Professional Development

Phase 3: Scoping Reviews for Key Areas
• Identify 10 areas for Actionable Nuggets™ in collaboration with key stakeholders
• Repeat scoping review framework process stages 1-4 for each identified area to ensure comprehensive representation
• Draft and distribute pilot Actionable Nuggets™ for FASD

Phase 4: Pre and Post-test Evaluation
• 20 primary care physicians will be recruited to participate in the evaluation of the project
• Prior to distribution of Actionable Nuggets™ participants will complete a survey measuring knowledge, attitudes and practice behaviors pertaining to FASD
• Following weekly administration of Actionable Nuggets™ for FASD, participants will complete a brief post-test survey designed to solicit feedback and reflection, and to measure any changes to knowledge, practice attitudes and application of material.

Current topics for FASD Nuggets (derived from Scoping Review):
1. Epidemiology of FASD
2. Role of Canadian Primary Care in Addressing FASD/Clinical Practice Guidelines
3. Recognizing FASD in School-aged Patients
4. Screening Tools for FASD
5. Diagnosis of FASD
6. Importance of Accurate Diagnosis of FASD
7. Addressing the Primary Disabilities of FASD
8. Addressing Secondary Disabilities of FASD
9. Community Services for FASD
10. Comorbid Disorders and FASD

Pending Outcomes (Expected 2015):
• Development of 10 Actionable Nuggets™ for FASD
• Evaluation of the utility of the Actionable Nuggets™ for FASD by participant physicians
• Increased physician understanding of best practices for FASD, including current epidemiology of FASD in Canada; the role of primary care in FASD; and the tools/resources available to prevent, screen and intervene in FASD

Conclusion:
• There is a unanimous national and international call from healthcare providers for additional information, tools, and knowledge to support their learning needs pertaining to FASD.
• Primary care physicians have identified the need for an inventory of information on FASD, including a registry of consultation specialists, clinical practice guidelines, referral resources, innovative CME approaches, access to educational material for themselves and for their patients, diagnostic and/or screening checklists, and electronic resources to support their clinical practices.
• Actionable Nuggets™ are a tool designed to enable physicians to fulfill their role in all levels of FASD prevention. Upon completion of this project in 2015, Actionable Nuggets™ for FASD will be available in both hard copy and electronic platforms.

References
Clarren, S. (2006). New insights into the epidemiology of FASD from various research methods with an emphasis on recent in
to the role of primary care in FASD; and the tools/resources available to prevent, screen and intervene in FASD.