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Dana Bakula

Laura Slosky

Kelsey Dean

Ann M. Davis

Sarah T. Edwards

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Caregiver Mental Health Screening in a Pediatric Feeding Clinic

Dana Bakula, PhD,^{1,2} Laura Slosky, PhD,^{1,3} Kelsey Dean, MS, RD, CCRP,^{2,4}
Ann M. Davis, PhD, MPH, ABPP,^{2,4} Sarah Edwards, DO^{1,2,3}

¹Children's Mercy Kansas City; ²Center for Children's Healthy Lifestyles & Nutrition; ³University of Missouri Kansas City, School of Medicine; ⁴University of Kansas Medical Center

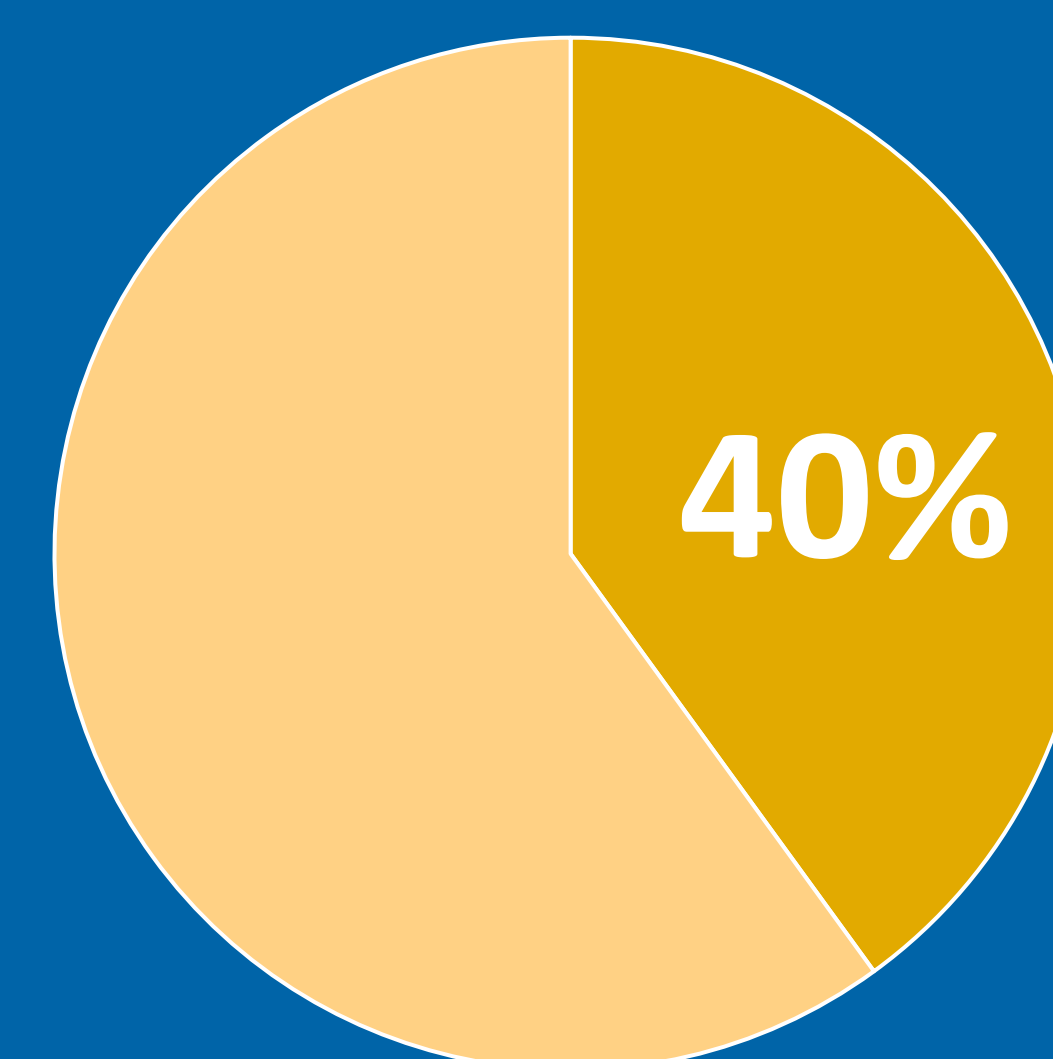
INTRODUCTION

- 1 in 4 adults have a mental health (MH) condition.
- Caregivers of children with feeding problems are at elevated risk for MH problems.
- Caregiver MH problems have a negative impact on child quality of life.
- It can be challenging to screen for caregiver MH problems in a busy pediatric feeding clinic.
- Feasible and brief methods of caregiver MH screening are essential.

METHOD

- From 2019-present our multidisciplinary feeding clinic has been administering a 2-item MH screener to caregivers of children at the new visit.
- The questionnaire asks: "Does the parent/caretaker have a history of mental health diagnosis (i.e., anxiety, depression, postpartum depression)". A follow up item asks what diagnoses each caregiver has.
- We descriptively evaluated these screenings.

40% of caregivers reported a MH problem on universal screenings.



This 2-item screener is not a perfect measure of MH but is feasible to implement and can be used to identify caregivers in need of support.

Regular caregiver MH screenings paired with point-of-care interventions are needed in pediatric feeding clinics.

RESULTS

- N=327 caregivers of children presenting for a new visit in feeding clinic.
- 40% of caregivers endorsed a MH problem.
- Rates of MH problems were higher for caregivers of infants (<12 months; 45%).
- The most common MH problems were anxiety and mood disorders.
- 22% of MH problems were identified as having post-partum onset.
- These rates of MH problems are comparable to the literature (20-40%).

Caregiver MH Diagnoses

Anxiety Disorders	Mood Disorders	PTSD	ADHD	Other
75%	68%	7%	4%	5%

DISCUSSION

- This two-item screener shows promise and was easily integrated into new visit paperwork.
- More research is needed to refine best practices in caregiver MH screening in pediatric feeding clinics, and to evaluate the sensitivity and specificity of this measure.
- Given these high rates of MH problems, point of care interventions to address caregiver MH in clinic are needed, as they would reduce barriers to seeking care in the community.
- This type of intervention may be particularly important for caregivers of infants, given high rates of postpartum MH problems.

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