

Improving quality in a rheumatology clinic in large academic practice

Abstract

Many patients with rheumatologic diseases are on chronic steroids for symptom control. Because chronic steroid use increases the risk of osteoporosis, professional society guidelines recommend bone mineral density (BMD) screening for osteopenia and osteoporosis. We aimed to improve the rate of BMD screening in patients on chronic steroids in our large academic outpatient rheumatology practice. Using the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model, we first conducted a retrospective review and determined that only 50% of patients on chronic steroids in our practice were adequately undergoing BMD screening. Over the course of three PDSA cycles, we conducted three interventions: an educational lecture, educational flyers posted in common areas, and an EHR-based prompt. The rate of BMD screening increased to 60.8%. We demonstrate a simple quality improvement initiative dramatically improved our adherence to evidence-based guidelines