Age-Related Disparities in Breast Cancer Screening
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No Disclosures
Purpose

• Breast cancer disparities arise from multiple aspects, including a patient’s age.

• By surveying patients at our breast center, we hope to identify age-related issues that cause challenges to patients receiving proper breast cancer screening, and raise awareness of these challenges to patients, referring providers, and radiologists.

• We hope to provide special workflow or support systems to elderly patients and their providers, in order to improve breast cancer screening in this patient population.
Method

• Printed and electronic Redcap surveys were provided to patients in order to expose their age-related challenges related to receiving appropriate breast cancer screening.

• Questions such as scheduling difficulties, transportation, other medical comorbidities, competency in using electronic devices, internet access, etc., were included in the survey.

• Analysis of the collected data was performed in order to identify the most commonly encountered age-related issues that could prohibit elders from receiving proper breast cancer screening.

• Questions were answered on a scale of 1-5 with “1” and “2” signifying disagree and “4” and “5” signifying agree.
Results

• Demographics
  • Of 247 collected surveys, patient age ranges from 17-85 years old
  • 32% of these patients are greater than or equal to 60 years old
  • 9% are less than 40 years old
  • 79% Caucasian
Results

• Specific age-related questions
  • “I have more difficulty scheduling appointments because of my age”
    • 0.8% agreed, all less than 40 years old
  • “I receive more negative treatment at my appointment because of my age”
    • 1.6% agreed, however only 1.2% of those greater than or equal to 60 years old agreed
  • “Breast cancer screening is less important because of my age”
    • 2% agreed, all of which were less than 60 years old
Results

• Questions related to difficulty with electronic devices
  • “Do you have an electronic device with internet access?”
    • 11% of those greater than or equal to 60 years old answered no or sometimes
  • “I am comfortable with using electronic devices to access online health accounts”
    • 16% of those greater than or equal to 60 years old agreed
Results

• Questions related to medical comorbidities
  • 25% of those greater than or equal to 60 years old have 5 or more comorbidities
  • However, none of these patients feel that their comorbidities prevent them from receiving proper breast cancer screening

• Questions related to race/ethnicity
  • “I have more difficulty scheduling appointments because of my race/ethnic category”
    • 0.4% agreed
  • “I am treated in a negative way at my appointment because of my race/ethnic category”
    • 0.8% agreed
Patients 60 and over comfort with students/trainees in exam room

- Comfortable or Neutral: 91%
- Uncomfortable: 9%

Patients 60 and over comfort with male students/trainees in exam room

- Comfortable or Neutral: 83%
- Uncomfortable: 17%
Results

Patients 60 and over who prefer a younger physician

98% Agree

Patients 60 and over who prefer an older physician

98% Agree

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Discussion

• Analysis of 247 collected surveys from breast cancer screening patients from the greater Nashville area has revealed that the majority of these patients are Caucasian and fall between 40-59 years old.

• In analyzing the responses of those greater than or equal to 60 years old, data has demonstrated that the vast majority of patients in this age category do not feel as though they have more difficulty with scheduling appointments, receive negative treatment, or feel as though breast cancer screening is less important because of their age.

• A large percentage of this age group has 5 or more medical comorbidities, however none of these patients feel as though this creates a barrier to proper screening.
Discussion

• Analysis has also revealed that the majority of those 60 and over are comfortable with trainees, including males, in the exam room and have little preference as to the age of their physician.

• The parameter which seems to pose the greatest threat to those 60 and over receiving proper breast cancer screening is access to an electronic device with reliable internet access.
Conclusion and Further Direction

• Survey responses from 247 breast cancer screening patients has revealed that most patients 60 and over do not report significant barriers preventing them from receiving proper breast cancer screening, other than having access to an electronic device with reliable internet access.

• As we continue moving forward into an even more technology dependent era, this could pose a real threat to preventing this age group from receiving proper screening.

• Further direction for the current study includes exploring avenues in which scheduling and communication could be less technology driven in order to accommodate those who may have unreliable access or who are not as “tech savvy.”
Thank you!