Assess Integrated Specialty Pharmacy Services as a Medication Optimization Strategy for Rifaximin in Hepatic Encephalopathy Patients

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**Introduction**
- Occurrence of fully symptomatic overt HE in patients with decompensated cirrhosis is 30-40% and risk of recurrence is 40% at 1 year with an additional 40% risk at 6 months.(1) Patients with HE account for nearly 110,000 hospitalizations yearly (2005-2009) in the United States.
- Chronic therapy with lactulose is challenging due to dosing requirements and side effects, and non-adherence has been identified as a factor for recurrent episodes of HE.(2)
- Treatment guidelines recommend adding rifaximin (Xifaxan®) to lactulose for ongoing management after an overt HE recurrence on lactulose alone to reduce the risk of further episodes and HE-related hospitalizations.(1)
- Clinical observations suggested that rifaximin therapy is not initiated in patients upon HE-related hospital discharge where indicated.

**Objectives**
Integrate the CHI Health Specialty Pharmacy medication access coordinator (MAC) into the cascade of care of patients during an HE-related hospitalization to optimize access to and initiation of rifaximin upon discharge.

**Design**
Retrospective assessment of integrated MAC assistance in the CHI Health gastroenterology clinic from September 26, 2018-March 31, 2019.

**Disclosures**
No financial relationships to disclose.

**Methods**

**Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total patients</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Included</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rifaximin initiated upon discharge</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits investigation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial assistance</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHI Health Specialty Pharmacy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusions**
- Integrated MAC assistance in a health-system gastroenterology clinic optimizes rifaximin access and initiation in patients following an HE-related hospitalization.
- Further evaluation is warranted to determine if medication optimization with rifaximin results in improved adherence and reduced readmissions in this population.

**Discussion**
- It is anticipated that more patients going forward will qualify for MAC assistance due to a reduction in the community physician groups providing care at CHI Health.
- Barriers to implementation included technical modifications for reporting, changes to pharmacy and MAC workflow, staff education, and provider competition.
- Ongoing barriers include eligibility requirements for manufacturer assistance programs.
- Currently, hospitalized patients receiving lactulose are being flagged as potential qualifiers for rifaximin therapy.

**Citations**