

Poster Session IV
Poster #23

The Factors That Influence The Utilization of Primary Care For Children With Special Health Care Needs

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The purpose of this study was to explore the relationships among the factors that influence the utilization of primary care (PC) by families for their child with special health care needs (CSHCN). The Health Promotion Model was used as the theoretical framework to explain the relationships among chronic sorrow, communication, family satisfaction with PC and perceived barriers/facilitators to the utilization of PC for CSHCN. The design of the research was a quantitative cross-sectional questionnaire study. The sample was a non-probability convenience sample recruited from three sources: The Boston Public School System, Family Voices (a nationwide parent support group for CSHCN), and Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress. The sample size was 215 subjects. The questionnaire incorporated demographic information, standardized instruments and newly developed scales. Hypothesis testing was performed using correlational statistics and confirmatory factor analysis. The results were expressed as a Structural Model. Confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the latent variable (LV) of communication had the strongest relationship with the LV utilization of primary care by families of CSHCN followed by the LVs of satisfaction, chronic sorrow and barriers/facilitators. Communication between health care providers and families and communication among health care providers were the strongest parameters of this LV and were statistically significant. The LV satisfaction also had a statistically significant relationship with utilization of primary care. The conclusions of this study included that good communication between PC, other health care providers and families resulted in adherence to well child visits. However while the LV satisfaction had a statistically significant relationship with utilization, satisfaction of families with PC did not result in increased adherence to well child visits. The LV of chronic sorrow and its parameters did not identify any statistical relationship with the LV of utilization of PC. The LV of barriers/facilitators did not have a significant relationship with the LV of utilization, however, the parameter of a physically accessible office was associated with adherence to well child visits.