

Fixing What's Broken: Achieving Equity in Palliative Care



Implementing A Screening Question on Racism in Healthcare During Palliative Care Consults

Janelle Linton, MPH and Megan E. Rau, MD MPH
New York University School of Medicine, New York, NY

Department of Internal Medicine
Division of Geriatrics and
Palliative Medicine

BACKGROUND

The current events including George Floyd's murder and the disparities between races highlighted by the COVID-19, motivated the NYU Langone Health – Manhattan Palliative Care (PC) team to confront their own implicit bias. A workgroup was then organized to develop a screening question on racism in healthcare to be included in the initial Palliative Care consult note. The question below aims to highlight the inequalities patients face in our healthcare system, identify gaps in care, and provide space for the patient to express their concerns.

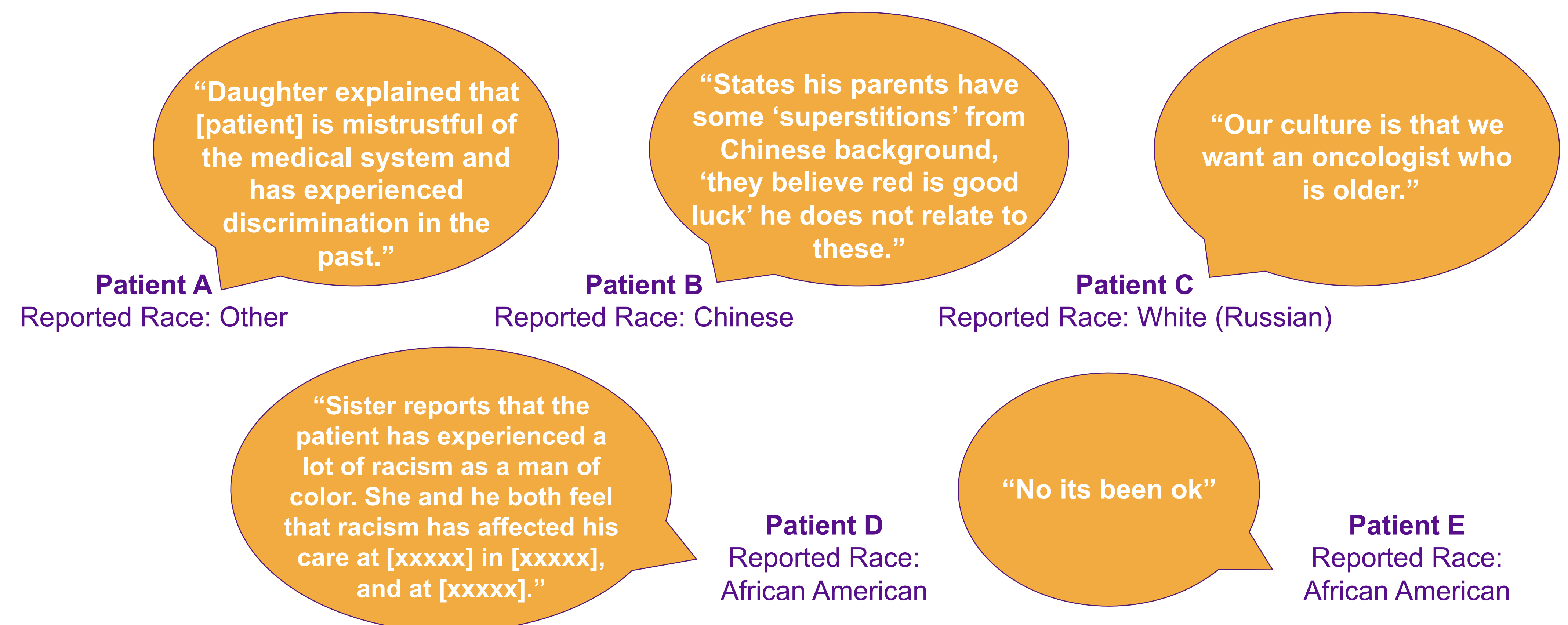
SCREENING QUESTION

“We realize that some patients may have experienced racism in medical care, making it hard for some to trust the system. Do you feel it has impacted you or your health care?”

METHODS

- The screening question was added to the PC initial consult note template in July 2020
- Consults were performed by physicians, nurse practitioners (NP), fellows, residents, and NP students
- There were 121 new PC consults completed July 1–31, 2020 for adult patients admitted to NYU Langone Health – Manhattan
- A convenience sample of 50 charts was reviewed to assess if the screening question was documented in the initial PC consult note

Figure 1: Patient Responses Documented in the Initial Palliative Care Consult Note



RESULTS

Chart review found 32% (16/50) of initial consult notes documented the screening question

Responses included:

- Three charting “none”
- One charting “did not address”
- Two charting “denies”
- Five charting “declines”
- Five charting patient responses (Figure 1)

CONCLUSION

This QI project assessed the feasibility of implementing a screening question on racism into a PC consult note.

By including a screening question on racism in healthcare PC providers can identify health disparities and contribute to the development of interventions aimed at ensuring respectful, quality care for all patients.

Next steps currently underway include identifying barriers clinicians face to asking the question, providing training for clinicians, and refining the language in the question.