Routine, self-administered, touch-screen, computer-based suicidal ideation assessment linked to automated response team notification in an HIV primary care setting.

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Abstract
BACKGROUND: Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and AIDS continue to be associated with an underrecognized risk for suicidal ideation, attempted suicide, and completed suicide. Suicidal ideation represents an important predictor for subsequent attempted and completed suicide. We sought to implement routine screening of suicidal ideation and associated conditions using computerized patient-reported outcome (PRO) assessments.

METHODS: Two geographically distinct academic HIV primary care clinics enrolled patients who attended scheduled visits from December 2005 through February 2009. Touch-screen, computer-based PRO assessments were implemented into routine clinical care. Substance abuse, alcohol consumption, depression, and anxiety were assessed. The 9-item Patient Health Questionnaire assesses the frequency of suicidal ideation in the preceding 2 weeks. A response of "nearly every day" triggered an automated page to predetermined clinic personnel, who completed more detailed self-harm assessments.

RESULTS: Overall, 1216 patients (740 from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and 476 from the University of Washington) completed the initial PRO assessment during the study period. Patients were predominantly white (646 [53%])
and male (959 [79%]), with a mean age (+/- standard deviation) of 44 +/- 10 years. Among surveyed patients, 170 (14%) endorsed some level of suicidal ideation, whereas 33 (3%) admitted suicidal ideation nearly every day. In multivariable analysis, suicidal ideation risk was lower with advancing age (odds ratio [OR], 0.74 per 10 years; 95% confidence interval [CI], 0.58-0.96) and was increased with current substance abuse (OR, 1.88; 95% CI, 1.03-3.44) and more-severe depression (OR, 3.91 for moderate depression [95% CI, 2.12-7.22] and 25.55 for severe depression [95% CI, 12.73-51.30]).

DISCUSSION: Suicidal ideation was associated with current substance abuse and depression. The use of novel technologies to incorporate routine self-reported screening for suicidal ideation and other health domains allows for timely detection and intervention for this life-threatening condition.

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