THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON PROCEDURE TIME AT A MULTI-PHYSICIAN GASTROENTEROLOGY PRACTICE IN NORTHERN KENTUCKY

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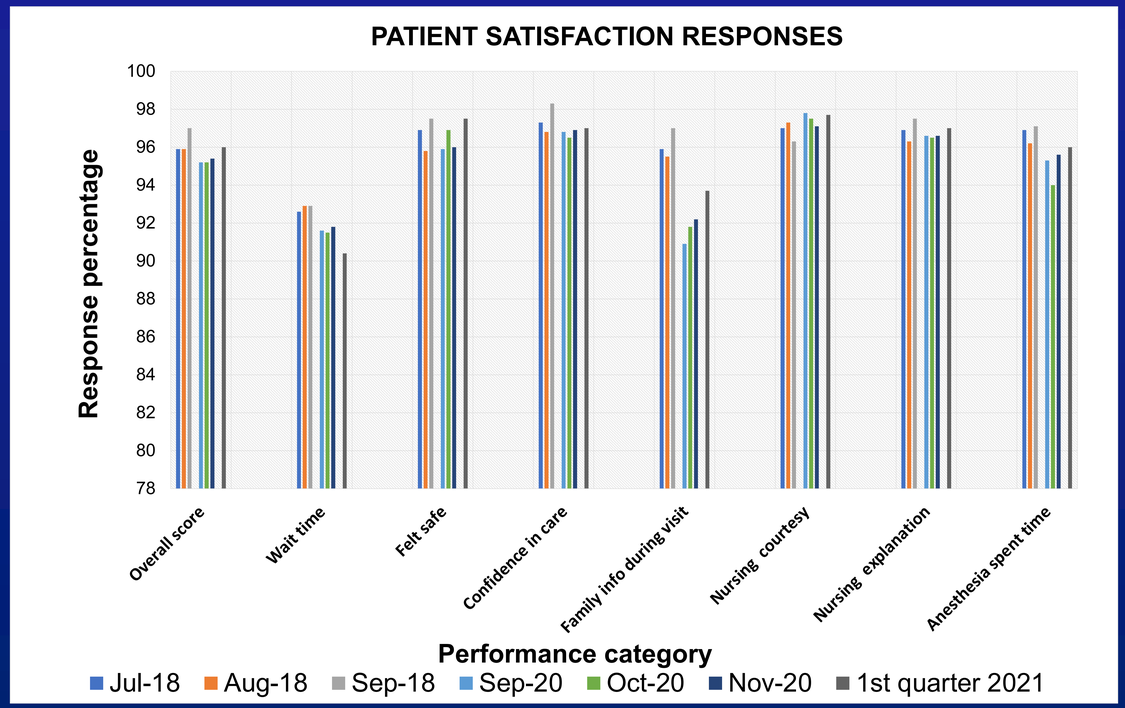
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Background

- **Purpose of this Study:** Determine the impact that restricting Responsible Accompanying Person (RAP) visitation had on the endoscopy center's throughput, patient experience, and patient satisfaction
- The decision to restrict entry of RAPs was made in order to maximize the safety of patients, staff, and providers during the SARS-COV-2 / COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods

- The study was conducted at a single specialty outpatient endoscopy center (Tri-State Gastroenterology, Crestview Hills, KY)
- The medical charts of 9 expert endoscopists were reviewed for two periods:
  - prior to COVID restrictions when RAPs could visit patients prior to and following procedures (2,176 patients; Jul-Sept 2018)
  - during COVID when RAPs were not allowed entry into the facility (1,901 patients; Sept-Nov 2020)
- Post-procedure information and discharge instructions were given to patients in the presence of the RAP for the first group
  - Information was conveyed to the patient prior to discharge and to the RAP via telephone for the second group.
- Procedures performed during special COVID-19 aeration protocols were excluded.
- For both groups, calculation of length of colonoscopies (min.), required pre-procedure history and physicals, room turnover, number of procedures starting late, and finished procedures after their allotted schedule were measured.
- We reviewed our standard patient satisfaction questionnaires for both groups.



Results

- Mean results of all 9 endoscopists were reviewed separately and in aggregate.
- There was **no statistically significant** difference in procedure start time, turnover time, number of history and physicals, or number of finished procedures after their allotted time between the two groups.
- There was a **statistically significant, but not clinically significant** decrease in colonoscopy time during COVID for 2 of the 9 endoscopists.
- Patient satisfaction scores during COVID RAP restrictions decreased.
- Although patients still indicated that they felt safe and were confident in their care during COVID RAP restrictions, the percentage of satisfaction fell from upper 90's to low 90's.
- There was a similar decrease in patient satisfaction as it related to the RAP receiving post-procedure information.

Conclusion

- Visitation restrictions for the RAPs
  - did **not** have a **statistically significant** impact on the patient's experience or colonoscopy throughput
  - did have a **negative impact** on patient satisfaction as it pertains to information given to the RAPs
- Patients were **significantly more satisfied** with post-procedure information being shared with both patient and RAP
- Future studies evaluating the impact of the RAPs involvement in overall patient satisfaction may be beneficial

Abstract ID: 118193 **Poster Number: P214**