

Ambulatory Care: Improving Fall Prevention by Establishing an Equipment Clinic for Evaluation, Education and Training on Assistive Devices for Ambulation



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BACKGROUND

- The purpose of this project is to decrease fall risk for patients by implementing a clinic for evaluation, adjustment and training on assistive devices for ambulation.
- Education on assistive device assessment will also be provided for clinicians within the practice.

PROJECT AIM

Specific Aim: To decrease the number of adult patients who are at high risk for falls as determined by the fall risk assessment scale by 15% from baseline over a twelve-month period at the ECU Family Medicine and Monk Geriatric Center.

PROJECT DESIGN/STRATEGY

- The equipment clinic will serve patients ages 18 and above who are seen at the ECU Family Medicine and Monk Geriatric Center. Providers in these centers will refer patients to the clinic as appropriate.
- The clinic will be staffed by a Geriatrics fellow with a background in physical therapy and Geriatrics faculty.
- Each patient referred will be evaluated for an appropriate assistive device for ambulation including proper adjustment and education on safe use of the device.
- Ongoing education in the form of in person and virtual presentations will be provided to clinicians regarding gait analysis, selection, adjustment and patient education on assistive devices to improve their comfort level with this in their individual clinics.

CHANGES MADE (PDSA CYCLES)

- This project is currently a work in progress and is in its first PDSA cycle which is establishing an equipment clinic and referral process.
- Plans for changes at the next cycle will be focused on streamlining the referral process to allow for patients to be seen more efficiently and to continue ongoing education for providers so that they can perform assessments in their own clinics and refer patients with more complex equipment needs to the clinic.

RESULTS/OUTCOMES

- Figure 1 shows the percentage of patients scoring "high risk" on the practice's fall risk assessment scale for the past eight months (baseline).
- Figure 2 shows the number of referrals, patients seen and no shows from November 2023 when the Equipment clinic was established.

Figure 1: Percentage of patients scoring "high risk" on falls risk assessment scale

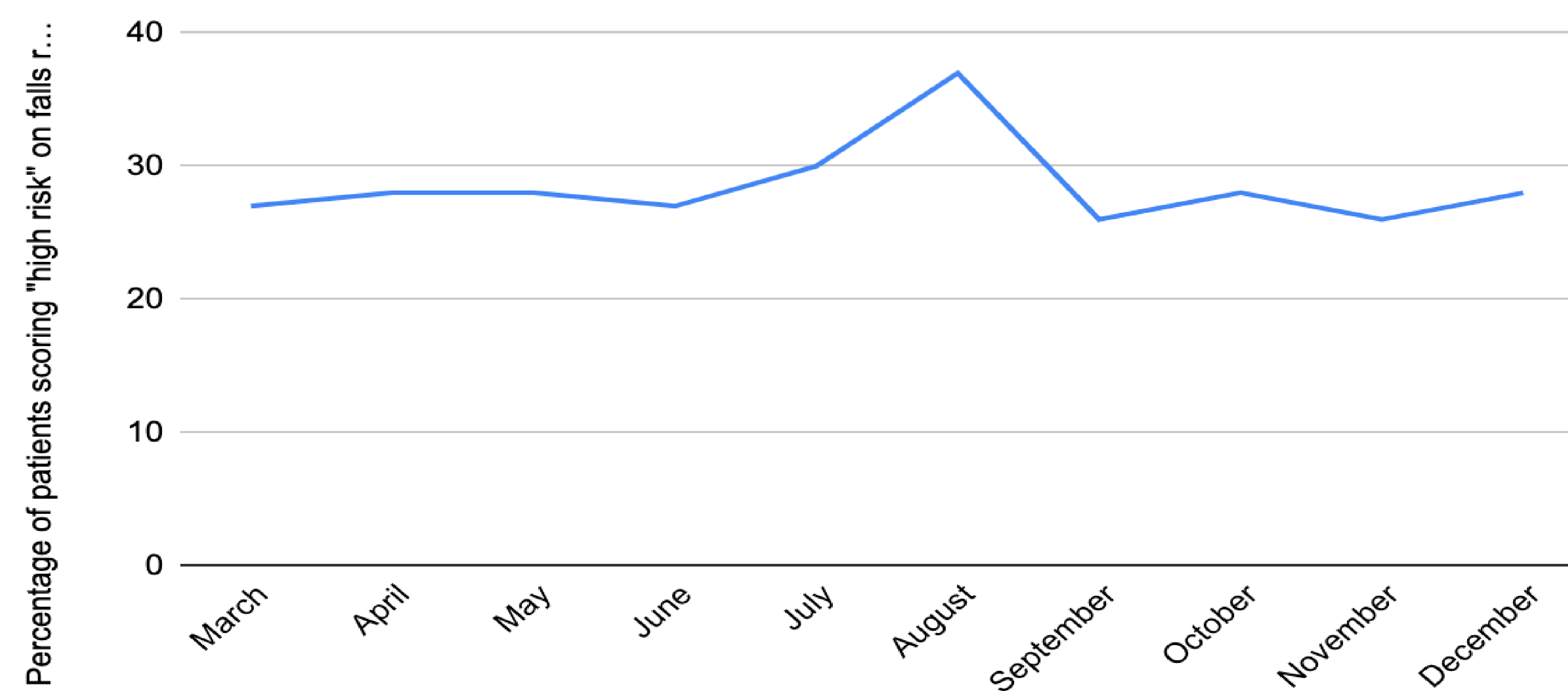
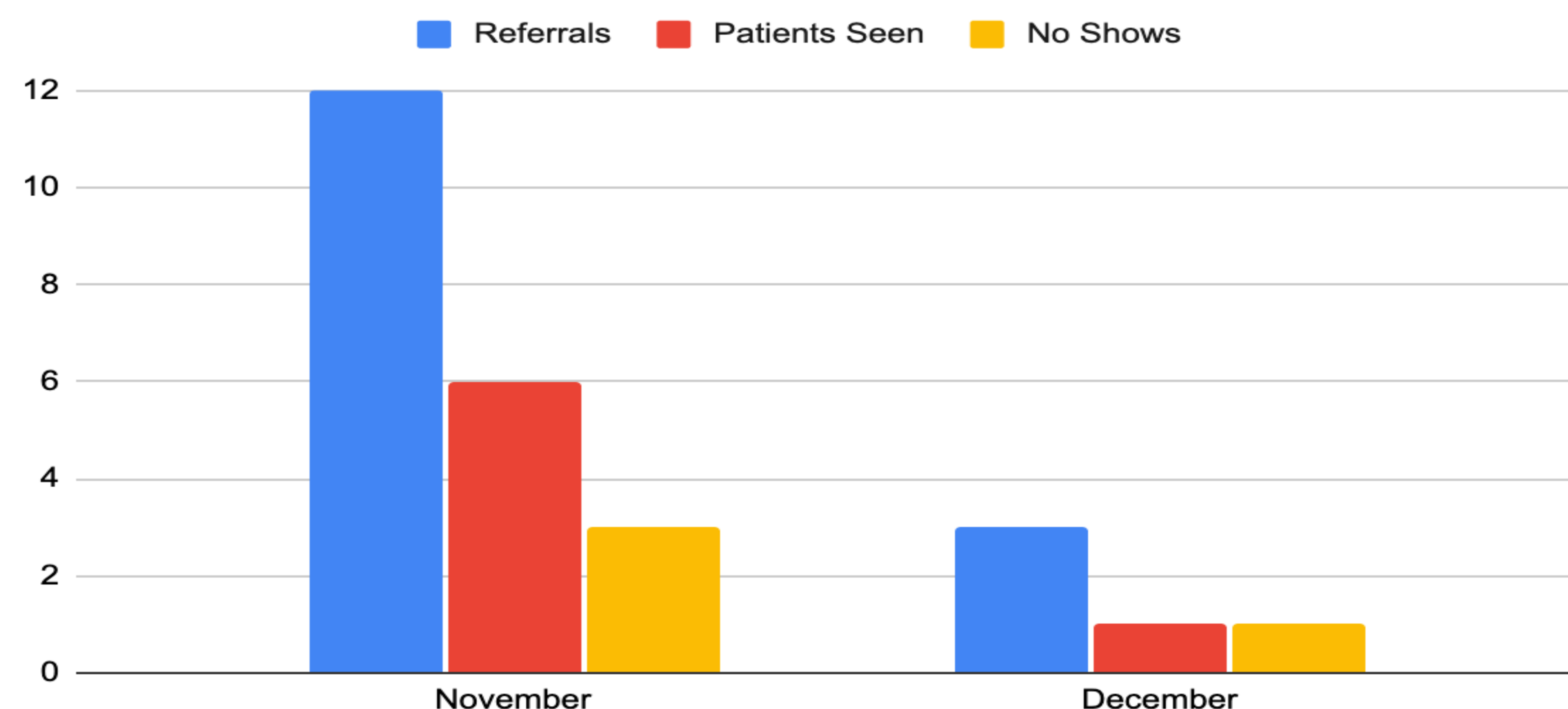


Figure 2: Referrals, Patients Seen and No Shows



LESSONS LEARNED

- The preliminary data from the first two months of the project indicate that providers within the ECU Family Medicine and Monk Geriatric Center do see a need for this service and have been very receptive to the education provided thus far.
- While it is too early in the cycle for data analysis, it is hopeful that the percentage of patients deemed high risk for falls will continue to decrease with these interventions.

NEXT STEPS

- Plans for the future of the project include:
 - Continuation of the clinic and possibly establishing a set day each week for patients to be seen.
 - Including physical therapy students to participate in the clinic will also be considered.
 - Education will continue to be provided to clinicians to improve their comfort level with prescribing and adjusting appropriate assistive devices for ambulation.
 - Extending this education to medical students with the inclusion of hands-on labs to practice adjusting various assistive devices and analysis of gait.

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