Pediatric PittNet Forms a Parent Panel

In October of 2018, Pediatric PittNet began creating a group of active parents to provide valuable input on child health programs and initiatives, which we named our Parent Panel. So far, participating parents complete monthly online surveys with questions on a variety of children’s physical and behavioral health topics. These topics may involve PittNet initiatives and parent preferences for and experiences with child health research. We request parents complete online surveys about once per month, each of which typically takes no longer than 20 minutes to complete. All participation is voluntary, so parents are welcome to decline any survey for any reason. In order to be a member of the Parent Panel, they must have at least one child under the age of 18 and live in western Pennsylvania.

So far, 110 parents have joined the Pediatric PittNet Parent Panel. We sent the first survey in March 2019, and since then we receive over 50% completion each month. Topics have included feedback on PittNet’s website and e-message boards in practice waiting rooms, motivations for participating on the Panel, and how primary care practices can help inform families about research.

PittNet’s Medical Director, Dr. Stacey Engster, presented information about the Parent Panel at the 2019 North American Primary Care Research Group Practice-Based Research Network (PBRN) Conference. Other pediatric PBRNs across the nation have engaged parents on advisory boards, but few have formed a virtual parent panel such as ours.

In the future, PittNet anticipates forming a Parent Advisory Board with a subset of 10-20 of the most active Parent Panel members. The advisory board is an opportunity for members to offer more in-depth input and feedback on child health research and protocols. In addition to the Panel’s monthly surveys, Advisory Board members will be asked to attend meetings. These meetings will be online or on the phone, but may also be in person. If you know a parent that may be interested in participating in the Pediatric PittNet Parent Panel, please contact us at pedspitt@pitt.edu. Stay tuned for more information about engaging parents through our Parent Panel and Parent Advisory Board!

Please Welcome!

Please join us in welcoming Jalina McClarin, BA as our full-time research assistant. Jalina is responsible for on-site screening and enrollment of participants. She is based in the Primary Care Center-Oakland, and will also be traveling to CCP-GIL Pittsburgh, and CCP-Moon this summer as part of the ETUDES Center.
ETUDES Center Begins in PittNet Practices

PI: David Brent, MD, Director; Bruce Rollman, MD, MPH, Co-Director; Brandi George Milford, MA, Center Program Administrator
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The Center for Enhancing Triage for Depression and Emergent Suicidality (ETUDES) in Pediatric Primary Care aims to assist PCPs with assessment, triage, and management for youth with depression and risk of suicide. Dr. David Brent (Endowed Chair in Suicide Studies and Professor of Psychiatry, Pediatrics, Epidemiology, and Clinical and Translational Science) and colleagues have developed innovative studies, incorporating technology into multiple interventions for adolescents who screen positive for depression or suicidality. His team utilizes feedback from adolescents, families, and clinicians in the development of these interventions. The Center is comprised of three core interventions: Screening Wizard, Text2Connect, and BRITEPath (https://www.etudes.pitt.edu/). ETUDES has conducted focus groups with providers, parents, and patients to get feedback about the content of the interventions as well as the best ways to conduct these studies in a primary care setting.

Screening Wizard is an automated decision-support system that will guide PCPs in making personalized treatment recommendations for adolescents with depression or suicidal ideation. This tool will generate talking points that address urgency, recommended level of care, and treatment preferences and barriers based on patient and family responses. Text2Connect is an interactive text messaging intervention for teens and parents that targets barriers to engaging in mental health treatment. The goal of Text2Connect is to increase motivations in at-risk adolescents and their parents to seek initial mental health care treatment. BRITEPath is an app-supported intervention to guide embedded mental health clinicians in effectively treating depressed and suicidal adolescents through the use of a safety plan, a list of resources and activities that an individual can use while in crisis. This intervention contains three parts: 1) Guide2BRITE, an electronic guide for mental health clinicians providing step-by-step instructions in the onboarding of app that includes a safety plan, emotion regulation, and distress tolerance skills on the adolescent’s smartphone; 2) the BRITE app, a personalized and interactive safety plan and self-monitoring tool for the adolescent that is downloaded onto the patient’s smartphone; and 3) the clinician dashboard, BRITEBoard, to track adolescents’ app use, distress, and treatment progress.

In May 2019, the ETUDES Center and Pediatric PittNet began pilot testing these interventions in participating PittNet practices. On the basis of the results of these studies and feedback from clinicians, parents, and patients, these interventions will be improved and combined into one integrated, e-prescribable program, Integrated Care to Help At-Risk Teens (iCHART), which will be tested in 12 sites. Barriers and facilitators to implementation and the best ways to maintain the intervention, should it be successful, will also be studied.

The ETUDES Center is also sponsoring pilot studies from junior investigators to study social media interventions for LGBTQ youth in rural areas, and the use of passive cell phone data to monitor youth’s symptoms of depression and suicidality. The Center is also developing machine learning algorithms to be applied to patients’ health records to identify youth at risk for depression and suicidality.

Special thanks to PCC-Oakland, CCP-Bass Wolfson Cranberry, CCP-GIL Pittsburgh, CCP-Natrona Heights, CCP-Moon, and CCP-Wexford for participating in ETUDES Center pilot studies.
PittNet Hosting Lunch & Learns Twice a Year

Twice a year, Pediatric PittNet hosts a UPMC Children’s Community Pediatrics (CCP) “Lunch and Learn” Session for providers. This past year, we had four PittNet researchers present results of their studies. These Lunch and Learns provide an opportunity for pediatric providers to 1) learn the results of research in which they may have participated, and/or 2) learn about research that happened in neighboring practices.

In December 2018, Dr. Jessica Levenson (Assistant Professor of Psychiatry & Pediatrics, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine) described the development of a sleep promotion program for adolescents. After her focus groups, adolescents and providers were in favor of the development of a brief, educational video for teens. Katelin Serody (MD Candidate, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine), under mentor Angela Caldwell, PhD, reviewed preliminary results from the Child Feeding Study, examining the relationship between parental anxiety and reported feeding problems among young children. Feeding problems were associated with increased levels of parental anxiety.

In March 2019, Katherine Lane (MD Candidate, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine), under mentor Harold Wiesenfeld, MD, discussed results from parent surveys regarding their acceptance of sexually transmitted infections (STI) screening at the pediatrician’s office. Parents indicated that they would accept incorporating routine STI screening into pediatric ambulatory care. Kelly Williams, MPH (PhD candidate, University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health) reviewed results from primary care provider interviews about which factors influence their decisions and capacity to identify and treat adolescent anxiety. Results indicate that efforts to standardize primary care providers’ identification of pediatric anxiety and to address barriers facing primary care providers’ management may decrease treatment gaps.

PittNet Lunch & Learns are held in the fall and spring. Please let us know if you are willing to present results from your study to pediatric providers through this forum! CCP providers, please join us Aug. 22 for a CCP Lunch & Learn about PittNet resources.

Special thanks to Jessica Levenson, MD, Katelin Serody, Angela Caldwell, PhD, Katherine Lane, Elizabeth Miller, MD, PhD, Laura Kisloff, MD, Harold Wiesenfeld, MD, Kelly Williams, MPH, Christine Cepullio, BSN, RN, CCPS, and CCP-Armstrong, Kittanning Office and CCP-Pittsburgh Pediatrics, Shadyside Office!

SCOUT-UTI Study Complete


ETUDES Center Frontline Innovation Contest

The ETUDES Center is hosting a frontline innovation contest for embedded behavioral health clinicians to identify ways to improve the care of their patients, with a planned event to present and choose the promising ideas this fall. For more information about the innovation contest, please visit: https://www.etudes.pitt.edu/projects-resources/front-line-innovation-contest.
Our Goal: "Improving Children's Health Through Research"

Mission Statement: To facilitate the translation of research discoveries into practice by promoting collaboration among clinical investigators, practitioners, and other practice-based research networks in order to improve children's health.

Protocol Submission Deadlines:
- Thursday, August 15 (Executive Committee meets Aug. 29)
- Thursday, September 12 (Executive Committee meets Sept. 26)
- Thursday, November 7 (Executive Committee meets Nov. 21)
- Wednesday, November 27 (Executive Committee meets Dec. 12)

PittNet Provides Grant Submissions Consultations
PittNet can assist investigators throughout the research process through a wide range of support services to meet your unique needs, including consultations for grant submissions. We are available to assist you in planning for feasibility and implementation in pediatric primary care practices prior to submission. Please reach out to PittNet as soon as possible so we can support your next grant submission!

PittNet also provides Letters of Support for grant applications, pending committee review. To schedule a consultation or inquire about other services, please contact the PittNet Administrator, Carrie Fascetti, at christopherc@upmc.edu or call 412-648-4197. For more information about our Letter of Support application process, please visit our website at pedspittnet.pitt.edu.

Network Membership
- 53 offices in 31 Pediatric PittNet practices
- 13 counties in Western PA
- Over 275 providers and approximately 275,000 patients

Network Activity
- Over 5,750 participants enrolled in research
- Over 230 research studies and approximately 275,000 patients

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A BIG Thank You to the practices hosting on-site research staff (denoted by +)