COLUMBIA

VAGELOS COLLEGE OF Physicians & Surgeons

PROGRAM FOR EDUCATION IN GLOBAL AND POPULATION HEALTH

Exploring the Relationship Between Impaired Mobility and Physical and Emotional Well-Being in Adults Living in New York City

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This study aimed to understand challenges faced by New York City residents living with mobility impairments and the factors that modify the risk of negative outcomes in their physical and emotional well-being.

BACKGROUND

The CDC reports that mobility impairment is the most common disability in the United States, affecting nearly 1 in 7 American adults.¹ Mobility impairment greatly limits the ability of individuals to travel for work, errands, social events, medical appointments, and other activities that typically constitute independent adult life. While the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law in 1990, expanding public transit and paratransit options for those with mobility impairments, there are still many barriers, both physical and non-physical, to urban travel for this population.² Existing evidence has shown that mobility impairment can negatively impact physical and emotional health by reducing access to healthcare and decreasing life satisfaction. One study found that women in the UK with a mobility impairment had 1.3 times lower odds of having a mammogram than women without a mobility impairment.³ Another study found that decreased mobility, independent of any comorbidities, has a greater negative impact on health-related quality of life than many other conditions, including migraines, stroke, asthma, and anxiety.⁴ However, all the ways in which mobility impairment harms health, and the protective factors that may mitigate such harm, remain to be clarified.

DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION

Patients were recruited from the Farrell Family Medicine Clinic and the Young Men's Clinic, which are part of New York Presbyterian's Ambulatory Care Network. These clinics are located in the Washington Heights neighborhood of Manhattan and serve all in need of care, regardless of the ability to pay.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

takes buses,

occasionally

encounters

challenges

subway,

family in same building but very little recent insurance support coverage of private (rather than shared) transportation to medical appointments has been life-changing

> • importance of friends/significant others for maintaining a positive attitude

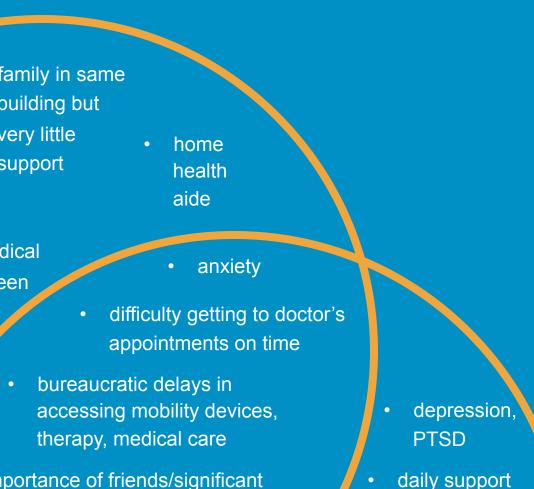
understate the severity of transportation issues at first

> arrives to disability

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the physicians at the Farrell Family Medicine Clinic and Young Men's Clinic for referring their patients for this study. I am also deeply grateful to the patients who generously donated their time and energy to participate in this study. I would also like to thank the Program for Education in Global and Population Health for funding this project. Finally, I want to express my gratitude to my mentor, Dr. Silvia Cunto-Amesty, for her help and guidance throughout this project at every step, from preparing the IRB protocol to designing the interview to recruiting subjects to today.

Funded by: The Program for Education in Global and Population Health and Columbia University



from family and

friends

financial means to

take Uber or taxis

public transit

• friend recently acquiring

wheelchair-accessible

vehicle has been life-

changing

everywhere, avoids

- appointments to find they are unable to accommodate the

METHODS

We aim to recruit 10 adult participants who have a mobility impairment via physician referral from New York Presbyterian clinics. We have defined mobility impairment as any neurological or musculoskeletal condition that limits one's ability to walk on a flat, unobstructed surface, or to climb any number of stairs. Participants undergo a telephone interview that addresses their mobility impairment, current physical and emotional health, mobility within and outside the home, support networks, and challenges accessing medical care. Qualitative content analysis will be used to identify themes and patterns that emerge from the interviews. To date, two out of ten interviews have been completed.

Preliminary results indicate:

- the importance of timely and accessible transportation to medical appointments complex referral processes, paperwork issues, and a lack of transparency from organizations delay access to mobility devices, therapy, and specialist care
- the presence of anxiety and depression in people with mobility impairments
- close relationships are key to improving mobility, receiving assistance with tasks, and coping with emotional issues

DISCUSSION

We can not yet make any conclusions about the data we have collected, as we have only preliminary results based on two interviews out of an eventual ten interviews. The final results of this study will be useful in the design of a questionnaire that can be used to survey a larger sample of New York City residents with mobility impairments.

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