

Improving Inpatient Consults at an Academic Medical Center Through a Consultant Recognition Initiative

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Introduction

- Effective consultations are a vital component of the care of patients in the hospital.
- Other institutions have used monthly programs to recognize excellent consultants, but have not shown whether this intervention has improved the quality of consultations.
- There has previously not been a tool to measure the quality of consultants as perceived by primary medical teams.
- We developed a consult survey tool to assess the state of consults and have implemented monthly recognition program that we hope will improve the quality of inpatient consultations.

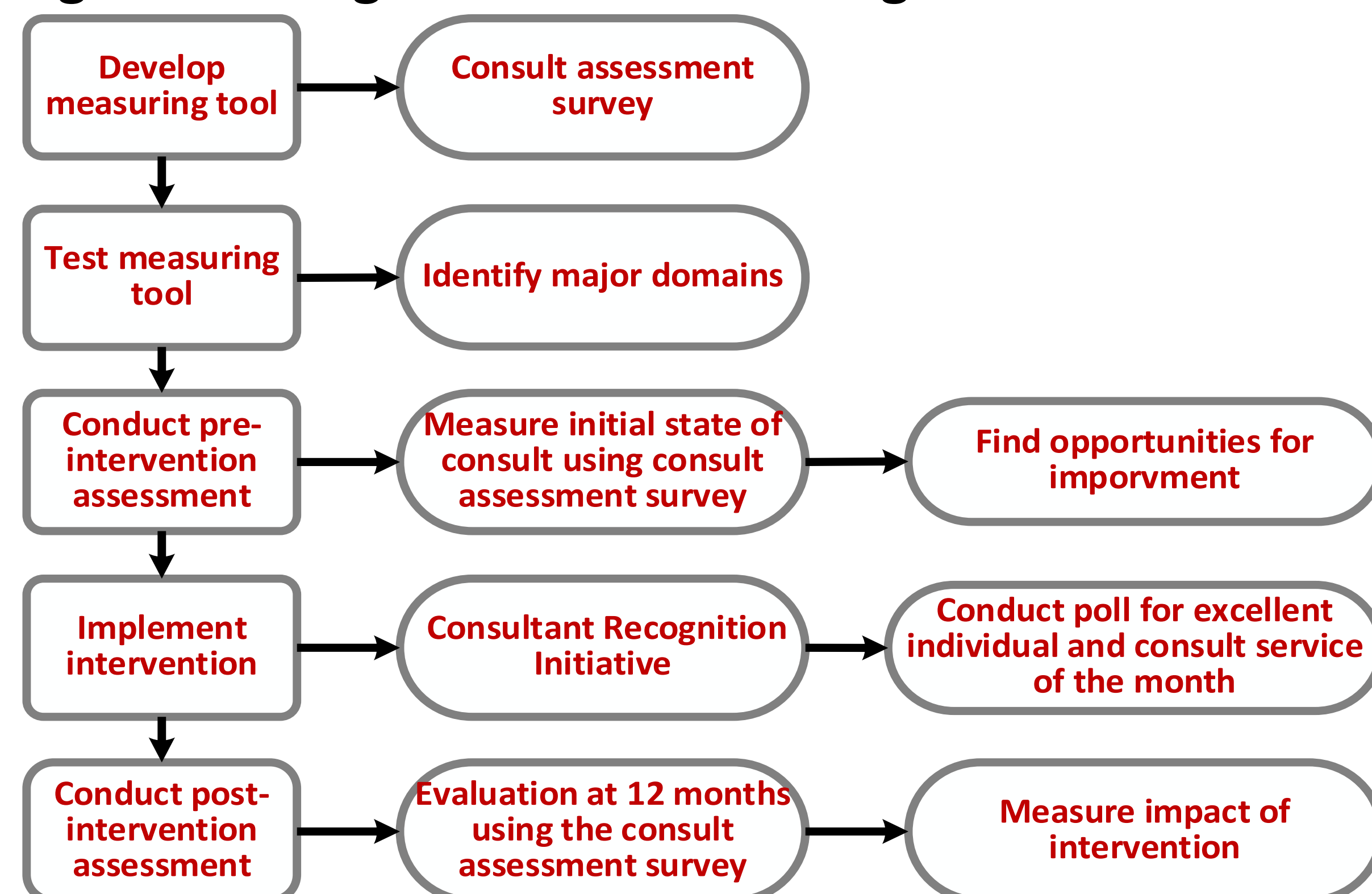
Specific Aims

1. The aim of our intervention is to implement a monthly program to recognize exemplary consultants and consult services.
2. The aim of this report is to describe the development of the consult survey tool and the initial measures of state of consult prior to intervention.

Intervention

- Consultant recognition incentive design: each month, all residents, advanced-practice clinicians and attending physicians from primary services receive a poll to vote for an excellent individual consultant and consult service.
- The winners for the month are recognized during Internal Medicine Grand Rounds.

Figure 1. Design of consultant recognition intervention



Study of Intervention

Figure 2. Design of consult assessment survey



- Measures: Our consult assessment survey instrument was developed based on prior literature and semi structured interviews conducted with thirteen individuals, including residents, fellows, advanced practice providers and attending physicians from both primary and consult services. Interviews were reviewed by two of the authors to identify domains and themes related to positive and negative consult experiences.

Table 1. Major domains Identified

• Communication	• Availability
• Professionalism	• Teaching
• Timeliness	• Patient-centeredness
• Ownership	

Results

Table 2. Demographics

Gender, No. (%)	
Male	52 (58)
Female	38 (42)
Position, No (%)	
Attending Physician	41 (45)
Advanced Practice Provider	18 (20)
Resident or intern	31 (34)
PGY Level of residents, No. (%)	
PGY1	11 (35)
PGY2	9 (29)
PGY3	10 (32)

- Design: Descriptive statistics were generated for all variables. Categorical variables were summarized by frequency and percentage
- A total of 353 surveys were sent out in June 2018
- 135 (38%) started the survey

Results (continued)

Table 3. Consult survey responses

Moderately or very effective utilizing closed-loop communication, No. (%)	101 (73)
Moderately or very timely in providing their recommendation, No. (%)	92 (88)
Moderately or very polite, No. (%)	98 (85)
Sometimes incorporated teaching, No. (%)	91 (45)
Moderately available for consults, No. (%)	92 (65)
Moderately or very helpful in arranging and or performing procedures, No. (%)	88 (78)
Moderately or very patient centered, No. (%)	90 (72)
Mostly arranged or always arranged follow-up appointments themselves No. (%)	88 (49)

Discussion

- We created a survey instrument to assess key domains and the state of consults at an academic medical center.
- Based on our preliminary statistical analysis, the survey appears to be internally consistent and reliable.
- The overall perception of consultation services by primary team members appears to be moderately favorable.
- With a relatively small minority of responses being in the highest quintile, there appears to be room for improvement in consultation service.
- Behaviors frequently not practiced by consultation services include incorporating teaching and arranging follow-up visits.

Next Steps

- Continue the monthly recognition program
- 12 months evaluation of program to assess impact of intervention on state of consults