Project ECHO® Care of the Elderly (ECHO COE)

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Objective
To evaluate the efficacy of Project ECHO® to increase capacity of Primary Care Providers (PCPs) in managing care of older adults

Background
- Project ECHO (Extensions for Community Healthcare Outcomes) is an education program using videoconferencing to build capacity in PCPs, share knowledge through collaborative learning and discuss cases in real-time
- ECHO facilitates Communities of Practice for PCP and interprofessional teams in community and long-term care settings using a hub-and-spoke model, connecting specialists at academic centres (Hub) with PCPs (Spokes) particularly in rural underserved areas
- The ECHO model ensures that knowledge flows in multiple directions: from specialists to PCPs; between PCPs; and from PCPs to specialists

Anatomy of an ECHO session
- Weekly sessions include a didactic presentation on a specific geriatric topic, followed by a de-identified patient case presentation
- Sessions are skillfully facilitated by a trained Care of the Elderly family physician

Primary care providers who participated in ECHO Care of the Elderly sessions demonstrated increased knowledge and self-efficacy scores.

Methods
Design: Mixed-methods; program evaluation
Setting: Virtual education program using video conferencing; April – December 2018
Participants: 94 PCP (28 physicians), with over 70% caseload of patients over 65 years of age

Cycle 1 and 2 Care the of Elderly:Primary Profession (n=94)

Main Outcome Measures: Knowledge, self-efficacy, and satisfaction

Results
- Demonstrated increase in knowledge and self-efficacy scores
- Four themes emerged from qualitative analyses: reflection on the experience, feedback on the delivery, impact on practice and suggestions for future implementation

Conclusion
- ECHO COE demonstrated positive impact on knowledge and self-efficacy scores in PCPs, highlighting the value and impact fostered through ECHO
- ECHO COE is a feasible educational tool for building capacity in PCPs

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